MEMORIAL

OF THE

REV. HENRY G. COMINGO, D.D

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MEMORIAL

OF THE

REV. HENRY G. COMINGO, D. D.,

PASTOR OF THE

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

STEUBENVILLE, OHIO.

CONTAINING

HIS TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE,

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNIVERSARY MEETING,

HIS TWO SERMONS, DELIVERED NOVEMBER 24th,

FUNERAL DISCOURSE, BY Rev. DR. C. C. BEATTY.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH.

STEUBENVILLE:
PRINTED AT THE HERALD OFFICE.
1862.

ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE:

PREACHED BY THE

REVEREND HENRY G. COMINGO, D. D.,

NOVEMBER 17TH, 1861,

Twenty-Five Years after his Entrance on his Ministry

AT STEUBENVILLE, OHIO.

HENRY G. COMINGO,

BORN

Near Harrodsburg, Kentucky,

FEBRUARY 2ND, 1809,

GRADUATED

At Centre College, Danville, Ky.,

JULY, 1832.

Licensed to Preach

By the Presbytery of New Brunswick, N. J.,

FEBRUARY 3RD, 1836.

Commenced his Ministry

In First Presbyterian Church, Steubenville, O.,

NOVEMBER 18TH, 1836.

Ordained Pastor

By the Presbytery of Steubenville,

MAY 24TH, 1837.

DIED

DECEMBER 1ST, 1861.

ANNIVERSARY DISCOURSE.

I remember the days of old, I meditate on all Thy works ; I muse on the work of Thy Hands.—Psalm 143: v. 5.

One much given to solemn reflection, has said with striking emphasis :—

> " 'Tis greatly wise to talk with our past hours,
> And ask them what report they bore to Heaven."

Israel was commanded to "remember all the way in which the Lord their God had led them." Even a slight acquaintance with the mental habits of the Psalmist will show that he found both a favorite and profitable study, in the records of the past. Hear some of the many utterances of the inspired Lyrist: "I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times; I call to remembrance, my song in the night." "I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord: surely I will remember Thy wonders of old."

We cannot believe that it will be displeasing to our Divine Sovereign, for us to occupy our attention with the suggestive and instructive retrospect of the times, and seasons given to us for our profit, now closed to us, and irretrieveably drifted beyond the bourne of Time. Hence, it is reasonable and proper, that on this special occasion, when we attempt to cast back our vision upon the way which the Lord has led us, for a quarter of a century, that first of all we lift up our hearts and voices to "the Father of Lights, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift," in fervent thanksgiving, and here raise our Ebenezer, inscribing upon it those memerable words of faith and prayer, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Standing in the peculiar position, in which we are placed this day, it makes a world-wide difference whether we look upon the quarter of a century, just now completed, or upon the same number of years this day begun. The former is the well explored country, all surveyed, and mapped, and open to the gaze of every beholder. The latter is the virgin continent, just looming up in the hazy distance, in sight of the discoverer. The former has written out its chronology, its discoveries, its biographic and historic sketches, and wholly withdrawn the veil from the once hidden epoch, unequalled in interest in any similar past period of the Christian era. The latter stands ready to begin, to-morrow, to turn

prophecy into history; and by a gradual, unremitting process, will bring to light the stupendous events, for which all the world waits with impatient expectation, and to inaugurate great providential developments, that shall thrill and startle the rising generation. The one is now the plain, practical, matter-of-fact lesson book. The other is the volume of brilliant speculations, all radiant with the bright day dreams, and fancy sketches of the good time coming, to engross the lovers of fiction, and render them oblivious of the safe and profitable teaching of the past. Impetuous as we are in our attempts to grasp the events of the future, we, after all our labored efforts, cannot tell what a day will bring forth. But even with the imperfect record before us, of the past quarter of a century, we may recur to those days of old, and gravely ponder their revelations and teachings, and rise from the lesson better fitted to take our bearings upon the untried waste of waters still ebbing and flowing in life's unresting ocean.

This day twenty-five years ago I first entered this pulpit, accompanied by the Rev. Elisha McCurdy, a venerable patriarch, whose name stands intimately associated with the great revivals, by which our church was much enlarged and strengthened, at the beginning of the present century. I then preached on the doctrine of justification by faith, from the text "Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rom. 5:1. On the third day of the preceding February I had been licensed to preach the Gospel by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, N. J.; and when about to leave the Seminary the succeeding autumn, Dr. Miller informed me that my old friend, E. T. McLain,—who had been preaching here—had been compelled to leave, on account of ill health, and he would suggest that I should take this place on my way to Kentucky, and spend a Sabbath or two here, if this congregation should still remain without a supply. It was understood that the severe illness of Dr. Beatty would render it impossible for him to resume his pastoral care, over this Church.

I had finished my course in the Seminary, and felt anxious to know whether and where the Lord had work for me to do, in his vineyard. I had prayed for Divine direction. Having been brought up in a slave State, and having witnessed the difficulties of maintaining ministerial fidelity in such a community, I had asked, with humbleness and submission, that God would grant me a field not cumbered with the embarrassments which I so much dreaded.

When I arrived at Pittsburgh, becoming impatient to reach home, and feeling a delicacy in offering myself to so large and important a Church, I wrote to David Hoge, a prominent elder, and mentioned the promise I had made to Dr. Miller, to call and preach here, provided the way was open; saying at the same time, that I would consider the promise as fulfilled, if the pulpit were occupied, and I would then feel at liberty to hasten homeward. To this he replied "that they had no one to preach the next Sabbath, and it was the wish of the session that I should stop and preach one day." I preached two days, expecting to start home the ensuing day, when, the river being filled with ice, I gave up my purpose, and accepted an invitation to supply the pulpit during the winter. In the month of February a call was made out, and put into my hands at the meeting of the Presbytery next ensuing, which, (after previously conferring with my friends, and asking the Lord to interpose some obstacle if it were not His will, or for His glory, that I should undertake to fill this important and responsible post,) I finally accepted.

In relation to this, I find the following entry in an old journal, never designed to see the light, but which places you in possession of the state of my mind at the time the call was submitted:

"February 15th, 1837. This day, by the Grace of God, I have been permitted to set apart for fasting and prayer. On the last Monday, the congregation of this town met and unanimously elected me their Pastor. For this I feel grateful, and see no reason why I may not accept; but in so important a matter I felt bound in a special manner to consult the Will of the Lord; therefore, this the *first* and *grand* object I have presented before His Throne, pleading that if obstacles or reasons should exist why I should not here abide, the Lord would show them to me, and lead me to the place in which He would have me to labor."

One other brief extract I may here note, as it seems to fall in with the history of my settlement over this Church:

"May 24th, 1837. This has been one of the most solemn periods of my life—the day of my ordination and installation over the Presbyterian Church of Steubenville. Doctor Beatty presided. Mr. McArthur, the Pastor of the Church in Cadiz—now a saint in glory—preached from these words: "I beseech you, brethren, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Dr. Smith, then President of Franklin College, (now Pastor in Greensburg, Pa.,) gave the charges. The exercises were solemn. I felt as though I could shrink away, and refuse to labor; I felt in a deeper, and more solemn manner than ever before, "Who is sufficient for these things;" the vast import of the work, and my need of everything from God to enable me to discharge the sacred and responsible duties laid upon me. I commonly find comfort in the belief that the Great Shepherd called me here. He has enjoined these solemn duties upon me, surely He will be with me to the end of life."

I venture to present these glimpses of the train of outward providences, and of the inner workings of my own heart in bringing about my location here, as the Pastor of this Church. I deem it proper to glance back at my surroundings in this town when I landed here, an inexperienced stranger, for the first time in my

life setting my foot upon Ohio soil. Then the streets were without gas-light; here, and there, a dim oil lamp served to make darkness visible. Our Churches, also, had a few faint lamps that gave the speaker the outlines of human forms before him, but little more could be seen of the congregation at the evening service.

Then, a large class of persons were engaged in hauling water from the river for the supply of seven thousand people—that being about the population at that period. Then there was no railroad within many miles of this place; the stage-coach and the steamer were the main public carriers, and with these modes of travel the public seemed quite contented. The mails were carried in coaches, making the ordinary time of transit twelve hours, from this to Pittsburgh. Though Prof. Henry had made some remarkable experiments with electro-magnetism, the thought of bringing Pittsburgh within one minute of this City, and of sending messengers from New York to the Pacific border that could outrun the chariot of the sun, had not yet found a place even in the imaginations of men.

Then, a large and beautiful section of our present City, lying north of Dock street, was chiefly an open field, and a convenient pasture ground.

The Churches then existing were:—one Methodist Episcopal Church, worshipping in a building of the form of a T, holding about five hundred persons, and standing on the site where we see the capacious and elegant Kramer Chapel. St. Paul's Episcopal Church then stood as you now see it, with the exception that it has been considerably enlarged, and decorated since that time. Dr. Morse was at that time Rector of that Church,—and here I may say that he is the only Minister left of all that were then in charge of the Churches in this city. On the lot upon Fifth street, now occupied by the 1st United Presbyterian Church, stood a small brick building, perhaps thirty feet wide, and forty long, where the Rev. Mr. Buchanan had ministered for a number of years. That structure since disappeared, and was re-produced on Church street, in the form of a dwelling house, where, perhaps, the present tenants lie down and rise up, not knowing that the brick walls around them were for a score of years and more, vocal with the teachings and prayers of that faithful and zealous pastor, who finished a long and useful life in our midst, and whose dust this day slumbers in the home of our dead. That Church was supplanted by a much larger, but rather unsightly building,

which has recently been changed into the tasteful and beautiful audience chamber, now occupied by the ministrations of the Rev. J. K. Andrews. On Fifth street, south of Market, stood the Methodist Protestant Church—a low, one-story brick building—which, perhaps, held about four hundred persons. The Rev. Mr. Elliott was the Minister then in charge; he was literary and speculative, much devoted in his studies, to the then popular subject of phrenology; an eloquent speaker, and much esteemed and admired in this community. That building has been happily displaced by the new and handsome Church, now so acceptably filled by the Rev. Mr. Abbott.

In this general glance at the Churches of this City, it remains that we notice the two new congregations formed since that time. The first was formed from this Church in the year 1838, first known as the Free, and now as the Second Presbyterian Church, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Patterson. Its Pastors have been the following estimable and beloved brethren: the Rev. Joseph H. Chambers—since called to his reward, the Rev. Dr. Beatty, the Rev. Wm. P. Breed, now of Philadelphia, and the Rev. Henry B. Chapin, now of Trenton, N. J. The Church building was furnished to that people through the munificence of my predecessor in the pastorate of this Church, the Rev. Dr. Beatty. A score of years has brought that Church through many difficulties, up to a maturity of stature and strength, greatly gratifying to the large number of faithful members who long have labored and prayed for its success and prosperity. The other new Church is the Hamline Chapel; that large edifice was opened January, 1847, on North Fourth street. Its communion has done good service to the cause of religion, containing now 170 members.

But we turn back to our own Church edifice. It had a high pulpit, approached by two spiral stairways, and shut up by two doors, which quite effectually concealed the minister, when seated, from all persons in the body of the Church. Its position was sixteen feet in front of the spot on which I now stand. The windows on the south side had some broken venetian blinds, and some other contrivances to keep the sun-light from glaring too vividly in the eyes of the worshippers. The walls were white; the galleries unfinished. The Church was heated by two small stoves, standing under the gallery, some twenty feet from the aisle doors. This house was enlarged in 1850, and has since

been decorated and improved so as to meet the demands of the congregation, wont to assemble here to worship God.

But now we turn rather to the interior history of this congregation, during the period under review; and meditate on the works of God's hands, and muse on His dealings with us.

This Church has been organized about sixty years, and has enjoyed the ministrations of the Rev. Mr. Snodgrass, the Rev. Wm. McMillan, the Rev. Obadiah Jennings, D. D., the Rev. Dr. Beatty, and the Rev. E. T. McLain.

On entering upon my pastoral duties here, I found everything well ordered, and the congregation well trained, under the thirteen years of the faithful pastorate of Dr. Beatty. Here I labored for many months without seeing any results of my ministry. At last I saw two persons appear before the Session, asking for admission to the Church. I shall never forget the impressions then made upon my mind. Now, I thought, I saw evidence that it was the will of God to own the instrumentality of my poor ministrations to save the souls of men. The question whether the Great Master would own my labors then met a hopeful solution. I well remember, that I felt solicitous to be the instrument of leading one soul to Jesus, and often thought that would more than ten thousand times compensate me for life-long toil in the work of the ministry. Here I will further remark, that many who have been added to this Church, during my pastorate, were evidently brought to embrace the Gospel through the ministrations of others. God's faithfulness to this branch of His planting, has been gratefully marked. Human agency, by whomsoever exerted, has been nothing in comparison with the efficient workings of God's Providence, His Word and Spirit in continuing and prospering this portion of His heritage.

The retrospect shows that in the past quarter of a century of marked vicissitudes, we have passed through seasons of great darkness, when general declension brought upon us the hidings of our Father's face; when open apostacy caused bitter griefs to many hearts; when the necessary exercise of discipline seemed to stir up the angry passions of those whom the Session desired to benefit, and reclaim by the use of this holy ordinance of God. Many such dark days, long and painful winters passed over us; and often, the question, has been asked at the Throne of Grace, and of one another, "is mercy clear gone forever?"

Yet we here bear witness to an important fact, that generally

after the painful work of discipline had been carried out, we were permitted to see tokens of Divine favor, in the deeper awakening of Christians, and the conviction and conversion of souls. Those days of heaviness and sorrow fled away; those nights of weeping were followed by seasons of refreshing and merciful visitation.

This fact in general we might infer from what we behold this day; that after the numerous removals, dismissals and deaths; after nearly one hundred members have been dismissed to our sister Church, in this city; and, on the other hand, a considerable number as the nucleus of the Cross Creek Church, there are at this time about seventy members more than there were a quarter of a century since.

Shortly anterior to that period, there had been two glorious revivals. The one in 1831, which brought in from the world seventy-nine members; the other in 1835, which added on a single communion occasion, fifty-three on examination. These refreshing seasons have ever afforded to my mind, and heart, the most cheering evidence, that in this congregation, God has had his hidden ones who did much by their prayers and supplications, in producing some of these blessed results which we have, from time to time witnessed, with tearful interest. We cannot now attempt to estimate the measure of gracious influences of the Holy Spirit which have sustained his people here against so many adverse influences. Great and marvellous have been His acts of kindness toward us in this respect, for which it behoves us to magnify and bless His Holy name. But in the tangible effects of His grace upon those who were straying far from God, in open rebellion, we may find cause this day gratefully to testify the wonders of His love. I cannot embody in words all that we witnessed in 1838; but our history records that fifty-five in that year came out from the world and confessed Christ, in this place. The ensuing year, forty-nine, in this presence, took up their cross to follow Christ, and came with you to the table of the Lord. The next year, fifty-five. For several following years, no signal manifestations of the Spirit of God were witnessed, yet small numbers were added to the Church every year, till 1855, when we saw, at one communion, twenty taking their seats, for the first time, at the table of the Lord. A time of much declension and darkness followed. The hearts of God's people were greatly discouraged, and many seemed ready to faint under the adversity of our beloved Church. With health broken, wandering for months in

a foreign land, disheartened and scarcely hoping to see my native country again, or resume my ministerial labors, in the beginning of 1856 I sent my resignation to the Session, in order that they might present it to the congregation. This, they in great kindness, and patience, declined to accept. In the course of that year, as most here present will remember, I resumed my labors, but with much doubt and misgiving.

The year 1858 ushered in a glorious revival, in which we were favored with the earnest, and profitable ministrations of the beloved McKennan, who has but lately gone to his blessed reward. That year we saw seventy-five new witnesses for Christ joyfully singing,

"People of the living God," &c.

We glance over the statistics of our past history with trembling emotion, 1307 members have been here enrolled in sixty years. The portion of that large number who have entered the church in the past quarter of a century is 805. Of these, 508 were added on examination, 297 on certificate. I cannot deny that in these results I find cause for profound thanksgiving to Almighty God, that he has owned such a sinner, such a poor, faithless, unbelieving laborer in his vineyard, and permitted him to see his life and labors connected in the most remote manner with such results. *Far*, *far*, is it from my heart to indulge in self-gratulation, or, vanity. How wondrous the grace that can make clay to open the eyes of the blind! Oh! how unspeakably more wonderful that He should link his own mighty workings with one less than the least of all His servants, and point to hundreds brought from darkness to light by the most imperfect ministrations. If these labors had been what they ought to have been, what they might have been, how far, far different the effects for the good of men, and the glory of God. More than this: I cannot but think with painful solicitude of my pastorate over this multitude. How often when the flock should have been fed have they been sent empty away. How often when I should have won wayward sinners by lifting up the cross, they have gone on in their downward course because Christ was so obscurely set forth. I confess I cannot think of the revelations of the last day without profound awe.

It may be that very many of those received on examination, entered the church with a false hope (alas! what mournful evidence in the lives of some) because they were not faithfully taught and directed in their religious decisions, because in our anxiety

to see them relieved, and enrolled as christians, we cried, "peace, peace, when there was no peace," and so left them for long years to grope their way in ruinous darkness, and delusion.

But even if no such unhappy consequences may have followed our labors during the quarter of a century just past, yet the apparent sum of these for this long period, reaches but the measure of success allowed at Shotts, to a young licentiate from one single discourse.

I will not delay this discussion to remark upon the $100,000* that in the time named have gone out from this congregation, for the interests of religion, through the various channels of benevolence, yet perhaps not one half of the members of the church, have habitually contributed to these objects, and those who did rarely reached, or, even approximated the measure of their obligations. We may well rejoice to think of the happy effects that must follow the multitudinous agencies for good that have thus been called into operation; but how many must ultimately mourn that they had received their Lord's money and buried it in a napkin.

Here, we may glance at some of the pleasant things we call to remembrance. We may begin with the many acts of christian kindness and generosity experienced from individuals, and the congregation. How much these things have lightened the burdens we have been called to bear!

There have been seasons when scores of the impenitent have been awakened, and with tearful interest have said to the session, "Men, and, brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" Though we had long mourned that there was no dew upon the mountains of Gilboa, and, that "the shields of the mighty were vilely cast away," "few came to our solemn feasts," and "the love of many waxed cold," venerable elders, who have now gone to their "crown of rejoicing" stood here imploring Almighty God, with cries and tears, "that He would not cast us away from His presence, nor take His Holy Spirit from us, that he would not abandon his heritage to reproach, but temper the wind to the shorn lamb, and speedily return and revive his work with power;" when these prayers were answered and many found the wisdom and power of God unto salvation; we saw with rejoicing and awe the tokens of the Divine Presence. In such seasons, we say,

*This includes the large testamentary gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Hans Wilson.

our joy was greatly modified, and, abated by the overwhelming sense of responsibility, the fear of misguiding those asking instruction and, direction, and of grieving and dishonoring the Holy Ghost. Yet even with all these abating causes, the turning of immortal souls to Christ for salvation, affords the pastor's heart the highest joy, he is permitted to realize on earth.

It is pleasant also to look back and see a half score, or, more going forth from our ranks, to preach the gospel with success and power at home and abroad.

It is also pleasant to the pastor's heart to see the membership that once were with us, going to different and, distant points of our country, and becoming efficient laborers in planting and sustaining other churches.

It is pleasant to learn incidents, relating to the fruits resulting from personal efforts, or public ministrations, with transient persons, with whom perhaps there was scarcely a personal acquaintance. I can best express my meaning by stating two brief facts:

In a boarding house on Market street, long since displaced, I called to see a sick man. I was kept waiting in a back parlor in which sat a stranger, apparently in delicate health. After a parley with my cowardly unbelieving heart, I ventured to speak to him "of the Saviour as the Great Physician, whose restorative prescriptions received by the soul, would render all the diseases of the body powerless to harm. However apparently fatal, they would be real blessings." Time passed on: I had forgotten the interview, till I received from that stranger on his dying bed, in a distant part of our country, a kind message, informing me that he was dying in the triumphs of faith, and that his thoughts were first turned to the great Redeemer by the few words incidentally spoken to him in that back parlor. Not long since, in a Convention held in a neighboring city a minister introduced himself to me, saying, "I perceive you do not know me, but I have reason to remember you, for in 1844 I was attending your church, a thoughtless youth; and then and there, I was first led to the feet of that Saviour, whom I now preach to others." The emotions thus produced are most pleasing; but at the same time, and in the same breath the words of the Psalmist were uttered in my heart, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory.' The instrument, the man, is a sinner; the power, the increase, is all of grace divine.

It is a pleasant remembrance, to see in the past, many

instances where God has owned our offices in the house of mourning, for the comfort and encouragement of the afflicted and dying, and permitted us to witness the triumphs of grace in expiring believers, and bow down with weeping circles at the throne of grace, and implore the sympathy, and the sustaining, and healing power of the Man of Sorrows.

But as night, and day, clouds, and sunshine, winter, and summer alternate in the natural world, even so in the pastor's experience, there are sad and mournful memories alternating with the seasons of pleasing interest, and agreeable incidents. Though no schism, or, division, ever, has taken place in the congregation, no alienation or, party strifes in the Session; but on the contrary great harmony of feeling, and unity of counsel have prevailed; yet at times there have been separations and unchristian hostilities among brethren, that cost many an unavailing effort for reconciliation, and in wounding the Church, were deeply wounding to the Pastor's heart, but the all-controling Hand of the Chief Shepherd, found times, and ways for the removal of these evils not in the reach of man's wisdom. This day I verily believe this congregation is freer from all those petty and painful heart-burnings, and strifes, than at any time of the twenty-five years gone by.

Another mournful fact this day called to remembrance is that we have received members into the Church with joy and hope, who ran well for a time, but subsequently fell away into criminal neglect and open apostacy. The trial of such occurrences comes with the most distressing effect upon a Pastor's spirit, who had comforted his soul with the hope that his labors were divinely blest, and, his prayers answered, in their conversion to God. The thought of the terrible doom the unhappy apostate brings upon himself is a heart-rending theme for a Pastor's meditations.

I have seen the young man awakened, and inquiring the way of salvation, and I have knelt with him in earnest prayer for his conversion; but he went away, and grieved the Spirit, and, hardened his heart; and I have been called to his bedside years afterwards when his melancholy condition of hopeless impenitence filled me with sorrow. I saw him sinking, and, death approaching, and at the intervals when reason resumed its throne, I sought to point him to Christ, but in another moment he would again break out in wild incoherent ravings, and —— so he passed away, per-

haps his very last words that fell upon his Pastor's ear were such as I pray God I may never hear again.

I have also been made to mourn when in the chamber of sickness I have witnessed what seemed to be a turning to God for pardon, and, salvation; the prayers, and hopes, and ecstacies of the sufferers, as they appeared to approach the grave, made many to rejoice, but alas! how often have we mourned to see such when recovered, and again engrossed in life's busy pursuits or pleasures, as utterly hardened and careless, and negligent of their souls, as ever before. Such experiences have made us tremble at the final issues in the case of those who have departed to the judgment bar with nothing but a death-bed repentance, to afford us any hope of their salvation.

I have seen the young man of fortune, and, family; amiable in deportment, attractive and lovely in his person, and fascinating in his manners, but the fatal cup turned him away from the precepts of piety inculcated by pious parents, and friends; from the Church of God, and the Cross of Christ and precipitated him into a premature grave. I will not say how often these mournful occurrences have been substantially repeated within the quarter of a century past; I well may say they have infused into the cup of my sadness many a bitter ingredient.

Again,—It has often been the duty of the Session to employ the discipline of the Church in some cases with the most salutary and happy results, but in many other cases discipline has signally failed, to reclaim and restore, the erring, and the straying member, and others arraying themselves against the authorities of the Church, have greatly pained, and distressed us by their untoward course. But over such memories we wish to draw a veil, seeing that an All-wise and All-constraining Providence has made the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder He has restrained.

The only other class of mournful remembrances we name relates to the partings with many removing out of our midst, who had long been co-laborers; again, and, again it seemed as though we should be broken up for the want of their aid, and co-operation; after all we saw our fears were groundless.

But how often have we been called to weep with those who weep in the house of mourning. It actually startles me now when I walk certain streets and can scarcely find a house into which I have not been called, when the significant badges at the threshold told of lamentation within, because the King of terrors had been

there. I now cannot tell how many hundreds of the members of this Church, I have visited in sickness and death, and, followed to the grave. I find upon the first three pages of the catalogue of Church members, put in my hands when I became your Pastor, nearly three scores have gone down from these familiar pews to their enduring homes in "the house appointed for all living." Of the four deacons who stood recorded in that catalogue, none remains in the board, and only two are yet living. Of the eldership, six in number, just one half are this day in the Church triumphant, and one half in the Church militant. Nearly twenty years ago James G. Hening removed to Missouri and there died. He was an eminently pious man of blessed memory; his walks were amid the dwellings of the poor, and the habitations of sorrow and affliction; he was full of Christian sympathy, and kindness; fervent in prayer, faithful in duty, and known, and loved by all the people. In the year 1847 David Hoge, and Jeremiah Hallock were taken from us to their rest, and reward in Heaven. Both were revered and beloved in their office as Elders, and in their characters as citizens, universally esteemed. The former, diffident, retiring, profoundly pious, eminently accomplished in literature, an able theologian, a warm friend, a faithful counsellor, and, a Christian gentleman; his memory is this day embalmed in the hearts of many who knew him, and yet survive him. The latter, the sage, reticent Hallock who was originally designed by his father, and, educated for the ministry; and when he preferred the law, and left his New England home for the West, received that father's last greetings in these words, "Jeremiah, as you have failed yourself to be a minister, I charge you now that you shall ever be the minister's friend." I may safely say of that good man now fallen asleep in Jesus, that he never forgot nor neglected his father's injunction. These good men and, true are all gone, sorrowful to us, was the day of their departure, for to us they seemed as "the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof;" we trembled for the ark when such counsellors, and intercessors were removed. But our apprehensions were without foundation, *it is the Lord*, and not man who keeps and defends His blood-bought church. They who were so long with us in our trials, and, conflicts, as well as in times of refreshing to-day are,

> "—saints above, how great their joys,
> How bright their glories be."

As we well know,

"Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears,
They wrestled hard as we do now,
With sins and doubts and fears.

We ask them whence their victory came?
They with united breath
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
Their triumph to His death."

Three of the original bench of elders are yet with us. A. J. McDowell, Daniel Potter, and, Wm. McLaughlin, who I am sure will heartily respond to all that I have said in relation to their departed brethren, and who are all this day looking with joyful hope to a blessed re-union with their former companions, and cherished friends, beyond the portals of the skies.

Here, I may turn your attention to a few matters, that have been made patent to my experience and observation, as a pastor.

First, That a church made up of an imperfect pastor, an imperfect session, and an imperfect membership, must necessarily develope many imperfections in its workings. Yet this is the sort of organization, God has chosen for the diffusion of His religion in our sin-ruined world. He hath committed the glorious, priceless treasure of the Gospel to earthen vessels that the excellency of the power might be everywhere seen and known to be of God and not of man.

I have learned that even the best of men have their seasons of passion, prejudice, and, perversity; yet after all, time, gentleness, and kindness bring them like the needle after the electrical storm, to resume the heavenward bearings of righteousness, and truth. I have seen excellent men, amid excitement, quitting their pews and, abandoning their places, with menaces and prophecies, yet those very men I have seen in the Church consistently pursuing their duty, I have been with them at their own request in sickness and death; and of that class yet living, I number some of my warmest personal friends.

I have learned not to give up hope when the night is dark, the storm lowering, and the vessel rudely tost by conflicting winds. Our Father is at the helm, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We may safely rely on Him, who reigns above the clouds, and "rides upon the storm," to see to it, that whatever becomes of ministers, or elders, rich men, or poor men, wicked men, or, devils, "the gates of Hell" shall never prevail against any single body of believers, "built upon the foundation of the Apostles, and, Prophets, Jesus Christ, himself being the chief corner stone."

I have learned that secret and open devices of malignant persons, and misrepresentation and direct falsehood, will not long have the power to do harm; they fail of their end, bring their authors to confusion, and, sometimes to sorrow. God preserves his servants despite their own weakness, blindness and ignorance, and by His hidden shield turns away all that else would prove injurious, or, disastrous to the reputation, and, usefulness of his servants. Surely "God *is* a Sun and Shield," and none need fear for safety who put their trust in Him. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

I have also learned that there are often wrapped up in the adverse and appalling providences of God, the richest blessings He is wont to bestow upon the children of men.

From looking at the past, we turn for a moment to the present and, the future. Here am I to-day as I never was before, at the end of a continuous ministry of twenty-five years. It is morally certain that such an occasion will never return to me on earth, just as now those years are gone, and all their issues for good, or, evil are sealed, so the entire limit of my service will soon all be past, and I shall enter upon the review, not by the light of dim memory, but by the light of Eternity around the Throne.

I see some to whom I have offered the Gospel of Christ for the period almost sufficient to bound a generation, they have still rejected Him; I confess I greatly fear that their decision is unalterably made. If so, how much of that result lies chargeable to my account?

This day, I believe a great number, who once occupied these seats, are seated around "the Great White Throne." What views, what experiences, what teachings, what joys are theirs! I cannot but look onward a little when those of us who remain, shall all be gone, a stranger's voice shall here, herald the Gospel tidings, and a great congregation of strangers shall fill these pews, and, hear, and believe, repent and drink of the fountain of the Water of Life and be saved.

Where, then, shall *we* be, who celebrate this quarter centennial anniversary? We shall lie in our graves, our spirits shall be with our Saviour, and our friends above, or, "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

For twenty-five years gone, we give thanks to God; its memories, its record, its history, demand our praise. Oh, as now we see the last year of this eventful period, its history is written in

fratricidal blood. But if we come up at the great reekoning day, without Christ, deceived by false hopes, or taking the awful hazard of His open rejection, what lines will be dark enough to trace our calamities? Shall we find blood-guiltiness charged against us, not indeed, fraternal blood, but the blood of Christ trampled under foot. May God forbid! Nay rather, my brethren, let us draw the veil when all our sorrows shall be ended, our last sigh heaved, our latest tear wiped away, our last pain of body, and, spirit assuaged; when, as a Church, and, congregation, those below and those above, with Pastor, elders and people, shall meet and dwell together; where Christ is, and the spirits of just men made perfect, the General Assembly, and Church of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven.

Then, indeed, all our years below will be gone; "*gone* like some small star that has been twinkling in the curtain of night, *gone*, like the dying cadence of distant minstrelsy as it vanishes into air, *gone*, like the word just spoken, never to be recalled, *gone*, like the clouds after the rain, *gone*, like the leaves of the autumn forest, *gone*, as yesterday is gone," *never*, *never*, *never* to return.

But of that congregation, none shall be removed, none shall be offended, none disciplined for offences; none shall sicken, or, sigh or, weep, none shall sin, nor suffer and none die; but with unwearied voices, and untiring strains, from hearts overflowing with soul-satisfying, eternal, growing joy, we shall ascribe, "Salvation to our God," even, "blessing, and honor, and glory and power, unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne and unto the Lamb, forever, and, ever," Amen.

PROCEEDINGS*

OF THE

ANNIVERSARY MEETING:

INCLUDING ADDRESSES

BY

REV. DR. BEATTY, AND REV. A. M. REID.

On Sabbath, the 17th of November, it was just twenty-five years, since the Rev. Dr. Comingo began his ministrations in the First Presbyterian Church, Steubenville, and the interesting occasion was celebrated in a becoming manner.

At a meeting of the congregation, previously, it had been "Resolved that we celebrate the Quarter Centennial Anniversary of the relation of Dr. H. G. Comingo, as Pastor of our Church, and that we extend an invitation to the ministers of all the Evangelical Churches, and to the congregation of the Second Presbyterian Church." The congregation of the Second Church united with the First in all the exercises of the occasion.

On the morning of the Sabbath, Dr. Comingo preached to a very crowded house, the discourse which is now published. Dr. Beatty, the predecessor of Dr. Comingo, as Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, had been invited by the Session to fill the pulpit in the evening, but was prevented from being present, by indisposition. The Rev. J. B. Patterson, of the Second Church, preached, instead, an admirable sermon from the text, "No man liveth to himself."

In continuance of the exercises of this joyful occasion, a meeting was appointed to be held in the First Church, on the Tuesday

* This account of the Anniversary is prepared chiefly from an article published in the newspapers at the time.

evening following. When the appointed hour had arrived, the house was filled with a deeply interested audience, the clergy of the place occupying seats about the pulpit.

The exercises were opened with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Abbott, of the Methodist Protestant Church. The Rev. Dr. Beatty then introduced the proceedings, by referring to the action of the congregation; and after speaking of the advantages of long pastorates, bore strong testimony to the great excellence of Dr. Comingo as a preacher, a pastor, and a brother greatly beloved; —somewhat as follows:

ABSTRACT OF REMARKS BY DR. BEATTY.

This is a rare, as well as interesting occasion, upon which we are met this evening. The purpose is to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary, of the entrance of the Rev. Dr. Comingo, upon his ministerial labors, in this congregation. Such occasions should not be rare, according to the good old Presbyterian usage of making the pastoral, like the marriage, relation, to be one for life, But from some cause, perhaps the influence of our Methodist brethren, who continually change the location of ministers, or from the restlessness of the age in which we live;—this good old custom is so much out of fashion, that a minister seldom continues twenty-five years in the same congregation. This is to be deplored, according to my opinion, whose views on the permanency of the pastoral relation, are pretty well known to most of you. There are advantages in the continued labors of a minister among the same people, where children grow up to maturity under his instructions, which cannot be compensated by any either fancied or real advantages of rotation. Such, however, is the fondness for change, both with ministers and Churches, that we are not often permitted to note such an event, as the quarter century anniversary of a pastorate. It speaks well then for both pastor and people that this relation has been so long maintained; and the interest of this season is equally creditable to both. I congratulate them upon it. Nor is this peculiar to this congregation; as it seems a trait in the character of the community, (I speak it to their praise,) that it is not given to change. My excellent brother here, the Rector of St. Paul's, (Dr. Morse,) has been such, more than forty years;—it is not very long since the Pastor of the United Presbyterian Church was carried to his grave, after a continued pastorate of upwards of forty years; and I trust

that his worthy successor may as long occupy the same place. Even the Methodist Churches, so far as their rules will admit, have showed the same inclination.

When I came among you, almost forty years ago, it was with no other expectation than that my relation as Pastor would last through life; but God ordered it differently. When this brother entered upon his labors in my place, how very little did I think that I should live to see even half as many years elapse. But I rejoice and thank God that it is so, and that I am privileged to unite with you on this pleasant occasion—offering our mutual congratulations. We have been permitted to enjoy each others society in close and intimate relations, and have labored long and delightfully together, without a serious jar or misunderstanding to interrupt our mutual, Christian and ministerial intercourse. I must think it evidence of unusual kindness and amiability that he could have so long forborne with one conscious of so many imperfections and errors.

His labors among you in preaching faithfully and earnestly the Word:—in pastoral visitation, and other good works, you all know as well as I do; but none of you can know, as well as I, the deep anxieties of his mind, and his fervent desire for your spiritual and eternal good.—If the brother was not present I might be induced to say more concerning him:—but you know it is not my wont to praise or compliment,—especially in the presence of the object.

And now it is well and fitting that this Church and congregation have prepared a suitable testimonial for their Pastor on this occasion; and with these few prefatory remarks, I give way to that member of the Session, who is charged with this matter, and as I understand is ready to make the presentation.

Mr. B. Drennen, on behalf of the officers and congregation of the First Church, then presented to Dr. Comingo a purse of gold and a handsome suit of clothes, as a testimonial of their love to him, and their gratitude to him for his abundant and faithful labors, since he had been their Pastor.

"The Dr., in accepting the gift, said that he had generally, been a 'Looker-on in Vienna,' and he now found that to be "the observed of all observers," was rather a sore trial to his modesty. He said that while he felt conscious that he had ever sought *them* and not *theirs*—the *flock* and not the *fleece*—yet this evening he suddenly found himself in possession of the fleece, and that the finest of the wool; nay more, without becoming an Argonaut, he found himself in possession of the *golden fleece*. He felt that there were circumstances in which even St. Paul would acknowledge that it '*is* a great thing that we should reap your carnal things' when it betokens so clearly the good feeling and affection of a grateful people to their pastor; if a cup of cold water given to a disciple in the name of a disciple should not be without its reward, then their reward was sure."

Several short addresses were now made. Rev. J. B. Patterson, of the Second Church, said he and his wife (the Second Church) had come back to spend a pleasant evening with their mother. (The Second Church was a colony from the First Church.) It was delightful to them, on this occasion of joy and gladness, to meet once more at the old family hearth. The Rev. Mr. Andrews, of the United Presbyterian Church, and the Rev. Mr. Christian, of the Episcopal Church, also made addresses appropriate to the occasion.

Professor Reid, of the Steubenville Female Seminary, gave a pleasant reminiscence of his first meeting with Dr. Comingo, in remarks as follows, at the close presenting Dr. C. with a little bouquet of wild flowers, gathered by himself on Mt. Blanc:

REMARKS OF PROF. REID.

In the month of September, 1855, I spent a long-to-be-remembered Sabbath in the Vale of Chamouni, in Switzerland. Toward eventide I walked out to worship in Nature's Cathedral. Scarcely a cloud was to be seen in the clear sky. And Mt. Blanc and the granite spires of his range and the glaciers at his feet, were all out in their glory. I ascended the *Flegere* a celebrated mountain opposite Mt. Blanc, a few thousand feet, for a better view. About midway up, I saw a stranger whom I took to be an American, whose face and mien greatly pleased me. He was gazing intently on the scene before us, and seemed to be entirely absorbed in the contemplation. I saw his thoughts were in the same channel with my own, and I ventured to address him. "Can an Atheist," said he, "look upon such scenes as these and be an Atheist still? Can he look upon these mountains and not see the hand of God, who piled them thus?" So the interesting stranger went on, directing our thoughts through Nature up to Nature's God. Right before us was the great white dome of Mt. Blanc, rising from his silent Sea of Pines. And

> "Mt. Blanc is the Monarch of Mountains,
> They crowned him long ago
> On a throne of rocks, in a robe of clouds,
> With a diadem of snow."

And our thoughts ascended from the snow-crowned mountain to the great white throne which it suggests and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away. And those thousand spires of granite, glittering in the sun-light, around the mighty dome of Mt. Blanc—piercing far, far, into the deep blue of the sky, carried our thoughts at once to the glittering spires of that Celestial City, whose walls are jasper and whose streets are gold. And the grand glacier, with its sheen of light, right in front of us, reminded us of that other "Sea of glass mingled with fire." And as we looked, and listened to the voices of Nature, and worshipped; as Nature's music came to our ear from pine-grove and cataract, "like some sweet beguiling melody," we could almost fancy them standing on this sea of glass too, "having the harps of God and singing the song of Moses and the Lamb," saying, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord, God Almighty." And the crystal river (the Arveiron,) that flows out from the foot of the sea of ice—the great glacier that lies in the lap of the Monarch, reminded us of the pure river of Water of Life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, and we felt that "Earth with her thousand voices praises God."

With such glorious views before us, with such high thoughts and holy contemplations we descended, the stranger and I, from the mountain and felt that life swells into grandeur

when dignified by recollections of such scenes. And ere we reached the little village that nestles at the foot of Mt. Blanc, I felt that I had found in that far off land a Christian friend and Christian brother. That friend was he whom we honor to night. That brother was the beloved Pastor of this Church.

I hold in my hand a very little bouquet of Alpine flowers—flowers plucked, by my own hand, from the side of Mt. Blanc, and I beg, Sir, your acceptance of this little offering as a memorial of our first meeting on the top of the Alps, and as a very slight token of my high esteem for you as a Christian gentleman and a Christian minister, an esteem which I assure you continues to increase with every passing year, And may I not hope that this little bunch of flowers will be a pledge that our friendship, begun in a far-off land and now cemented by Christian love, will extend into that other far-off land from which no traveler returns.

Dr. Comingo said, in reply, "that he had a very vivid recollection of the day, and, scene so eloquently described by his friend the Professor. He greatly appreciated the kind spirit which dictated the words just spoken. He would keep these flowers as a precious memento of a very pleasant incident in his life. He thanked very heartily *all* the friends who had so often shown him kindness. God would reward them. He felt that "*he had borne the heat and burthen of the day*," that *the shadows were lengthening and the quiet evening was coming*, but he could look forward with hope, nay with joy, to the hour, when he should be re-united to some who had gone before, and should be ready to welcome those who came after."

After the singing of a grand anthem, in fine style, by the Choirs of the two Churches; the assembly was dismissed with the Benediction by Dr. Morse, of the Protestant Episcopal Church. But this was not the conclusion of the affair. The whole assembly adjourned to a large hall in the city, to partake of a magnificent supper, which had been prepared by the ladies of the First Church. Probably eight hundred people partook of the supper. It was really a joyous and happy occasion. The Pastor's heart was refreshed by so many cheering evidences of affection: he felt strengthened for his future work, and the hearts of his people were knit to him in closer bonds than ever. Long will it be remembered with pleasure, by all those who participated in it.

It is with the greatest hesitation, and reluctance, that these last sermons, of Mr. Comingo's last earthly Sabbath are permitted, in their fragmentary, and, imperfect state, to see the light; and they are only yielded to the affectionate urgency of a sorrowing people, and in the remembrance that he ever held his own reputation, subordinate, to the good of men, and the glory of God. Mr. Comingo rarely wrote out his discourses with completeness, and always with abbreviations which others understand with difficulty, the following ones, from the fatal but unsuspected disease of the chest, which made writing irksome, and the premonitions of his own heart which led him to depend on the inspiration of the moment, are marked examples of this. The greatest care has been taken to preserve his own expressions, even when ambiguous, or mutilated, rather than desecrate them by the shaping of another pen. The whole speak plainly, that the hand, that wrote but did not correct, is in the dust.

TWO SERMONS:

BEING THE LAST DELIVERED

BY THE

REV. DR. HENRY G. COMINGO,

SABBATH MORNING AND EVENING, NOVEMBER 24TH, 1861.

"Peace be unto you."—John 20: 19.

THIS was a common form of oriental salutation, at meeting, or, parting; and like our own terms "good-bye," "farewell," its professed import, was good-will, kindly interest in, and prayer for, the welfare of the person addressed. Often, however, these are the merest, idlest, emptiest forms, that fall from the lips only, without a response in the heart. But they are not always a thoughtless utterance. That Mother who says "farewell," as she presses to her heart for the last time, the son who is hastening to the vessel, that will put a hemisphere between them, means it all. And here that beautiful salutation, "Peace be unto you," from Him "who spake as never man spake" expresses more than Mother's heart with all its overflowing tenderness can feel, more than the human understanding can comprehend.

. . . . . .

What a day was that first day of the week which dawned so many centuries ago upon the ancient city of Jerusalem! What a day of days to be remembered while the world stands, as the day spring of joy, and salvation for ruined man. The early dawn of that day presents to our view the Lord of Glory, bursting the bars of death, conquering our last enemy, leaving the grave triumphantly, and becoming "the first fruits" of them that slept, saying, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be they plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction."

The sorrowing women "came very early in the morning" "when it was yet dark" to the sepulchre to perform the last offices for the lifeless form of Him they loved, and were followed by Peter and John, they found the tomb untenanted by Him they sought, and wondering and perplexed at the angelic vision, "had gone away again unto their own home," Mary remaining at the sepulchre weeping, then Jesus made Himself known to her, and honored her with a message to His disciples. That same day saw Him walking with two of the disciples to Emmaus rebuking them as "slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets had spoken," uttering that emphatic interrogatory, never to be forgotten by one sinner saved by grace, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" and then expounding and illustrating the teachings of Moses and all the Prophets, and showing their direct application to Himself.

That evening He came to the city whence He had gone out in the morning, and sought the secluded chamber where the disciples were met with doors closed to keep the hostile, and persecuting Jews from malignantly intruding to overhear their conversation, or, disturb their worship. It is difficult to conceive the thrilling emotions of that company of sorrowing disciples when they beheld their Lord standing in their midst, prefacing His words of grace and mercy, with the salutation "Peace be unto you."

This was a mighty, heart-quickening thought, all the past, its sins, its perversions was forgiven, forgotten; He came not as a wrathful Judge to reckon with them for their unbelief, and unfaithfulness; He came not to reproach them with their blameable conduct; He brought with Him from the sepulchre something very different from upbraidings: He came with peace in His heart, and, upon His lips, He said "Peace be unto you."

. . . . . .

Let us consider

First, The significance of that "peace" here declared to the trembling, anxious disciples.

Secondly, The extent of the benefits then assured to them.

Thirdly, The future blessedness it would bring to their experience.

So far from uttering an unmeaning form of words, the Savior employed one weighty as eternity, and designed to convey, when falling from His divine lips, more than tongue can adequately express.

. . . . . .

A learned expositor says the word *Eirene*, peace, in a civil sense, is the opposite of war, and dissension. Then in a tropical sense it means peace of mind, tranquility arising from reconciliation with God and a sense of the divine favor. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and *peace* in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost." "The *peace* of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts, and minds through Christ Jesus." The evangelical Prophet sets before us the same great Gospel thought. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our *peace* was upon Him." This is the great foundation stone of man's security and happiness. The procurement of this peace was the grand object of Christ's mission, and mediation. The accomplishment of this peace was first secured as He rose from the sepulchre, for He "was delivered for our offences, and raised again, for our justification." Hence *that* which was upon His heart in all the course of His humiliation, in all His sufferings, and abasement, in all His teachings, and sacrifices, in all His prayers, and, agonies, and only finished when He gave up the ghost, and, was under the power of death for a time, and rose the victor over the grave and over death, He hastened to cry to His beloved followers, "Peace be unto you."

It links itself with happiness and bliss as their procuring cause. Hence we read of "the way of peace," that is, of happiness, and of the "sons of peace," or bliss or happiness.

. . . . . .

Further the Saviour also included in this benediction, the earnest good wishes, and, kindness of his heart. . . . . .

Thus we see that such a word upon the Savior's lips comes to the ears of mortals, with an importance, and, significance that language can scarcely express. He points to what He has purchased for His people, to what He would cause to be proclaimed and published abroad by His ambassadors, "Peace on earth, good will toward men."

Here words are things, things of the greatest magnitude, of the highest intrinsic value to all men. His word created the universe, and at his bidding, in the twinkling of an eye, ten thousand worlds would spring forth again in order, and beauty. But such words would not procure for poor, helpless, sinful man, one-half such gifts and blessings as we find in his address to the secluded worshippers in the holy city. . . . . .

Secondly, Here we glance at the extent of the benefits then assured to them by the words of our Lord. "Peace," says Baxter, "containeth infinite blessings, it strengtheneth faith, it kindleth charity." . . . . . .
These words now spoken were not simply designed to allay the sudden perturbation, and, alarm that might have been awakened by His unexpected presence in their midst. . .

The Saviour had said much to them about Peace before His death; "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." "These things have I spoken unto you that ye might have peace." Nay long before His advent He was proclaimed, "The Prince of Peace."

Though they had been conscious of once standing in open hostility to God, had defied His anger, and wilfully trampled His law under foot; yet now coming up from the tomb His work finished, His Father's seal of approbation upon him, His "everlasting righteousness," now "brought in, "as assured to every believer; as these now believed, hoped, trusted, worshipped, He proclaimed as theirs peace, reconciliation between God and their own souls, and acceptance as righteous in His sight, for the sake of the divine merit now made theirs in an everlasting covenant. This was a boon that could never else have been attained and realized. There was but one ransom price that could avail; *that* was now offered and accepted, and therefore they might receive the assurance of peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Jehovah *Tsidkenu* ! my treasure and boast,
Jehovah *Tsidkenu* ! I ne'er can be lost:
In Thee I shall conquer by flood and by field,
My cable, my anchor, my breast-plate, my shield."

Besides this they then had peace of conscience, the direct outgrowth from the state of pardon, and acceptance secured by the merits of Christ.

Great imperfections, short-comings, and sins would constantly recur to the jealous observation, of the anxious heart, but the blood of Christ would allay the accusations of conscience and relieve from all apprehension of falling under God's wrath, or of coming into condemnation. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died."

How blessed is this condition compared with that of the soul in which conscience is ever pointing to fearful retribution that shall wring the soul with sorrow, and writing accusations that could not fail to bring to our minds the treasures of wrath laid up in store for us. . . . . .
They then also had the assurance of the Saviour's gracious wishes, and, all sufficient offices, so that nothing should harm them, or, make them afraid.

Our catechism defines the benefits we receive in this life—"assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end."

. . . . . .
"Assurance of God's love, peace of conscience." . .
. . . . Guilt being purged from us in the sight of the Lord we stand in His favor. . . . .
"Come with boldness to the throne of grace," cheerfully acquiesce in the dispensations of God. . . . . .
"Joy in the Holy Ghost." . . . . .
. . . "Increase of grace" and the principle of perseverance therein to eternal life.

Thirdly, The future blessedness this peace shall realize to their experience.

As they are by the righteousness of Christ reinstated in the eye of the law, and judgment of God so shall they reach the meetness and qualifications requisite to enable them to enjoy Heaven.

. . . . . .
The appointment of sorrows and reverses good. . . .
. . . . . all efficacious
. . "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory, that shall be revealed in us." . . . . . .

. . "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." .
. . . . . "we glory in tribulations."
The resources whence their joys flow . . . .
. . the exhaustless well-springs in Christ. We must survey His merits, we must see the treasures of His wisdom, we must follow the exertions of His power, and the outpouring upon us, of His heart of hearts, in that "love which passeth knowledge."
. . . . It must be commensurate with the capacity of the soul to receive of God, and, of God to give, and with eternity in duration.

These words were better than the offers of gold and silver, houses and lands, honor and authority, crowns and sceptres. Indeed no greater gifts were in His hands, than these He declared to the eleven.

As Christ was there so He delights to be in every company of worshippers. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I, in the midst of them."

. . He is there not as a mere spectator but to dispense consolations and blessings. How sad the fact that many are so slow to believe this, and wound our Lord by cold neglect.
. . . . . Peace . . . .
Let me exhort you to maintain this among yourselves. "Behold, how good, and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

But I proclaim this peace to *you* . . *every* one:
. if you only really, and truly believe. . .
see what is *yours*.

From this time forth let us ever hear these words of Christ as we kneel in our closets . . . . . at the family altar, where the few meet, to call unitedly upon His name, or, as we pour the public prayer in the sanctuary.

. . When we enter His church He will teach us the immeasurable blessings He conveyed in these words of peace.
. . . . . He will whisper them in our ear, as the last of earth fades from the glazing eye; and salute us with them as we enter the habitations of His glory.

"Occupy till I come."—Luke 19: 13.

The occurrences which drew from our Saviour the wonderful parable in which our text is found, took place in the city of Jericho, as Jesus passed through on His way to Jerusalem. The many marvellous works He had done had excited the curiosity of a citizen of that place, a man of fortune and position, a collector of customs. Being little of stature, the crowd that surrounded our Lord seemed likely to prevent his seeing Him, but forgetful of his dignity, and impelled by a divinely implanted desire, he climbed up into a sycamore tree that over-shadowed the wayside. Thompson in his admirable volume "The Land, and the Book," concludes this was not the mulberry, as some have supposed, but the Kharub or Syrian Sycamore, a tree usually planted along thoroughfares in oriental countries, and admirably adapted to the purpose for which Zaccheus selected it, having a rough, shaggy trunk, and giant arms.

Our Lord was not unobservant of the workings of his heart, and graciously responded to his deeply felt, but unuttered desire by saying to him, "Zaccheus make haste, and come down for to-day I must abide at thy house." The processes within his heart are not developed, but we find as the blind saw, the deaf heard, the dumb spoke at the Saviour's bidding, so the selfish worldly spirit of this man soon became conscious of a great change, as was evinced by the quick and ready benevolence expressed, and the earnest avowal of resolutions for the future. The Saviour then declares in the presence of others that He had thus signally blessed Zaccheus "forasmuch as he was a son of Abraham," and further intimates that the great object of His wonderful mission to the earth was to seek and to save the lost. The gross views of the Jewish people blinded them so that they saw nothing higher in the sublime spiritual lesson the Lord had just spoken than the assumption of a temporal kingdom, and their deliverance from the Roman yoke. Indeed as they drew near to Jerusalem, they were so carried away by this delusion as to look for his immediate enthronement. In His inimitable wisdom the Saviour designed to

correct their erroneous views, by the brief and instructive parable which He proceeded to narrate. A nobleman went to receive the investiture of a kingdom, falling to him in a distant country. Of this they had familiar examples. Most of the Kings of the East at this time were vassals to Rome, and the heir, seldom ventured to ascend the vacant throne without her sanction and sometimes a journey to the Capital was requisite to ensure their succession. Herod, and, Archelaus reigned by favor of the Romans.— To ten servants the nobleman delivered ten pounds (equivalent to the talents of the parallel parable in Matthew,) with which each was to do business till his return, enjoining their duty and obligations, in the words of our text, "Occupy till I come." I know few words says an eminently pious writer more searching and impressive than these *four*. They are spoken to all who profess and call themselves christians. They address the conscience of all who have not renounced their profession and turned their backs on christianity. They ought to stir up the hearers of the Gospel to "examine themselves whether they are in the faith, and to prove themselves." After such a process of self-inspection, a large company here, but recently met at the Lord's table, not we trust with any such misguided apprehensions as bewildered the minds of the secular, sensuous Jews but we have reason to hope you ordered your purposes and plans of life for the glory of the Master who so lately placed in your hands, fresh tokens of His love and pledges of His return.

It will not be unprofitable we trust to dwell upon these four significant, and, impressive words so earnestly spoken by the Lord Jesus. They are as really and truly addressed to us, "on whom the ends of the world are come" as to those who gathered round Him in the home of the publican.

It is an impressive thought indeed that Jesus *speaks to us*. His very words are ringing in our ears. It is true we hear not the sweet tones of voice, which conveyed his blessed lessons of truth and consolation to all hearts so that they wondered at the words of truth and grace which He spake.

. . . . . .

But when we have a lesson so brief, and practical from the understanding, that is infinite, from wisdom, that is unsearchable, from a friend that loved us while we were his enemies, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all evil, and make us kings and priests unto God, when He has gone to prepare a

place for us, and declared that He will return again, and receive us unto Himself that we may be with Him, and behold His glory; surely it is but reasonable that we should most deeply, earnestly and, reverently give our thoughts, and careful and practical attention to every syllable that falls from His lips!

. . . . But in the next place we inquire into the significant import of these words.

The servants of the nobleman were to do business, and, increase wealth, the christian is to do good and promote the glory of the Master. Behold what He has entrusted to each one of His children. . . . . .

The germ of the new life is planted by His own hand in your heart.

One grand stage of the development, pertains to the part of our pilgrimage anterior to the grave.

What a work is to be wrought in the riddance of all those evil growths, that spring like noxious weeds, to retard the better, and more valuable plants in the garden of your soul. Selfishness is adverse to the heaven-born benevolence of the new nature, it must be eradicated; sloth is opposed, to pains-taking labor and, dilligence in all the appointed duties of the christian walk; sensuality to faith, sinful pleasure, to the spirit of devotion, self-righteousness, to the habitual trust in Christ . . the flesh to the spirit, corruption to grace.

. . . . the course of duty when we become new creatures.

What has He given into our hands to be accounted for, and usefully employed till the day of release.

Consider,—your bodily health and strength, mental gifts and capacities, money, and earthly possessions, rank, and position in life, example, and influence with others. Liberty to read the Bible, and hear the gospel, plentiful supply of the means of grace.

All these are *your* pounds, all these are to be used and employed with continual reference to Christ's glory. Of Him come both riches and honor, His is the silver and His the gold, His is your body, and His your spirit, He appoints your habitation, and He gives you life and health, "ye are not your own—ye are bought with a price." Has God imparted to you new life . . the Holy Ghost . . opened to you precious promises. . . the throne of grace . . . given you daily access, to christains and the impenitent .

. . assured us not a cup of cold water unrewarded?

To what specific ends are we to direct our efforts in following the spirit of this injunction?

This is the best and most successful method of turning them to our own spiritual advantage. Job's captivity was turned when he prayed for his friends. The deepest gloom and despondence of the christain's heart have often broken away when he became interested for others, and his own troubles have been wholly forgotten. The effort and desire to benefit others, and especially labor and care for their salvation and spirituality marvellously bear the souls of believers onward in assimilation to Christ.

. . We look at Captain Vicars maintaining a nearness to his Saviour, amid the bustle of camp life,—amid the intensest war excitement, it is because he was not ashamed to bear Christ to others, wherever he mingled with his fellow soldiers, officers, or privates.

But the glorious results to be expected from these agencies afford a mighty incentive. . . *Dr. Abeel* . . conceive the labors of the Sabbath School teacher . . those little seeds of truth placed in the soil of youthful hearts . . . *The Bible class* . . *the instance of Miss Ching.*

The word spoken to cold languishing believers,—an instance in my recollection. Many years ago there was in this church a christian of whom it might be said he was "faithful in a little" he loved the courts of the Lord's house, and ever filled his seat in the prayer-meeting assisting in his humble way in its devotions. On his way to the latter he passed the house of a brother in the church, a man of richer gifts and longer christian experience, but alas! one who had never tasted the sweet fulfilment, of that promise "where two, or, three are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them." Meekly, but perseveringly the humble man plied the older christian with entreaties, and expostulations, rather than arguments, until at last he yielded, accompanied him to the prayer-meeting and became a joyful, and most edifying participant in its services, and though then far advanced in life lived to plead with God for this church, and prevail, when even the wise virgins around were sleeping.

In primitive times the gospel was thus diffused by all classes even down to slaves. In our own land, and day we have a beautiful illustration of what even this humble class may do for that

gospel which makes them freemen in Christ. "Old Moses" was a slave on the eastern shore of Maryland; converted by the grace of God he prayed that his master might partake of the same blessings. These prayers, overheard at his master's dwelling gave offence, and he was sold, but he who proclaimed himself the hearer of prayer, brought their subject to the feet of Jesus.

This is the only time for this work. In it you may engage for a brief day, and then never have access to do aught again for eternity . . . . . .
Christ promises to be with you and . . . His grace sufficient for you. He will give His holy spirit too to them that ask Him. Thus an open door is set before you to occupy: . . . . . as Christ did in His day as many of the cloud of witnesses who are now in glory. . .
But the great thought is that Christ comes, "till he come." This we understand in the general import, to indicate to his people and church, the great requirement at their hands, till he shall gather His elect from the four winds.

. . But to the individual it points out that nearing period within perhaps a single step, when this vapor-like life shall vanish, and we shall be seen in our familiar walks no more, "in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh."

Then although we had labored unseen, and endured pain and insult and often mourned our ill success, we shall find that in every step of our faithful occupancy we were sustained by His presence, care, and sympathy.

It shall then be seen that not any of our efforts were forgotten, or overlooked,—that at an unexpected moment, a word dropped, fixed itself in the memory,—took root in the heart, and sprang forth, under the energy of the new life.

Oh! what answers to prayer, what happy and vast results from the exertions of those who sought to obey this injunction, five—ten—an hundred-fold results, and life everlasting. The reward when He comes,—the rest,—the joy, the future occupancy when *He bids us "come up higher,"—"eye hath not seen."*

But the Lord cometh; say, ye, who bear the name of Christ what is your present attitude? are you hiding your Lord's money . . . making no exertion, do you not think of the work to be done? do you exonerate yourselves on some flimsy pretext? are you hurrying to meet Him with nothing to show but a few outward formal acts, on the unerring records of your

coming Lord? . . . . . .
Your heart barren of interest for others, your hands utterly idle . . . . that you never labored, or prayed for the ungodly, that your talents were neglected, or wasted on your own selfish aims and purposes.

What must we say when we meet our Lord to account for that He has granted, and we shall find nothing of all he intrusted, of the ample means, temporal and eternal, material and spiritual, all were abused, neglected despite these solemn words.

If you have not made the experiment believer, consider that your course locks up from your enjoyment the treasure house of christian experience.

. . . . . Oh, what a blessed vision do I behold, this church awaking to the import, and obligation of these words! How many mentally confessing past delinquency, resolving to obey their Lord . . . How many saying, "Lord what will Thou have me to do?"

Three hundred prayers in secret addressed to the hearer of prayer for the welfare of the whole, and the conversion of sinners. Three hundred words,—sentences, spoken, or efforts daily made for the impenitent. Three hundred bright and impressive examples of Christ-like walk and devotion.

These, in the mass . . . in the house of prayer and sanctuary all making out an account in the record of the angel, well-pleasing to the Master. And as one and another is called, the Saviour's salutation meets each on the confines of the celestial city "well done good and faithful servant." . .
Then . . . the final gathering of all, while growing numbers shall remain "to occupy," and thus from this spot till the end of time, a stream of faithful occupiers ascend to glory . . . . . and at last the reward, and bliss complete before the throne of God and the Lamb.

FUNERAL OF REV. H. G. COMINGO, D. D.

The following account is taken from the Presbyterian *Banner*, and was written by the Rev. JAMES ALLISON:

At 9 o'clock on Wednesday morning, after a ride on the railroad of two hours, we found ourself at the station in Steubenville. This place we had frequently visited, and every time before this there was a kind voice to welcome us and a warm hand to grasp us. But to-day that voice is silent, that hand is cold. And we, along with multitudes of others, have come to attend the funeral ceremonies of the Rev. HENRY G. COMINGO, D. D., who had died on the previous Sabbath morning, in the 53d year of his age. The whole city seemed to feel that it had met with a great loss. The children in the streets played less merrily. The countenances of men and women were more than usually serious, and they talked in subdued tones. While business seemed almost entirely suspended.

At the hour of 10 o'clock, the body of our deceased brother was carried into the church by the Elders, followed by the widow, her two orphan boys, and her relatives. After these came the clergymen of the city and others from a distance. The church had been already filled by the congregation and inhabitants, so far as they were able to obtain admittance. As the body—enclosed in a beautiful burial casket, and arrayed in the suit of clothes presented him a few days previous to his last illness—was slowly carried up the aisle, an involuntary sob escaped hundreds of lips. So audible was the weeping that no heart was untouched. The house was completely draped in black, the daylight excluded and lamps lighted.

The solemn services were introduced by singing the 633d Hymn—

"Vital spark of heavenly flame."

The Rev. J. B. PATTERSON, pastor of the Second Presbyterian church, then read appropriate selections of Scripture, taken principally from the 15th chapter of 1. Corinthians. After this, prayer was offered by the Rev. JAMES I. BROWNSON, D. D., of Washington, Pa. Then the Rev. C. C. BEATTY, D. D., who conducted the exercises, said, that owing to the fact that he had been the predecessor of Dr. COMINGO in the pastorate of that church, and his long intimacy with his deceased brother, it would naturally be expected that he should say something, on this occasion, of his worth and of his hopes. But neither the state of his health nor his emotions would allow this at present, and he would give place to others. On a future occasion he would discharge this duty, at a time of which due notice would be given. He then introduced the venerable Rev. HENRY WEED, D. D., of Wheeling, a member of the first class that graduated at Princeton Theological Seminary. DR. WEED said: What is the voice of a poor and infirm old man, amid this drapery, these mournful faces, these weeping eyes, and these throbbing hearts? An inaudible voice was speaking to them to-day; it was the voice of God. Gladly would the speaker be silent, but in consideration of the dying request of his brother, who so deliberately contemplated death, he could not refuse to speak.

He had lost a friend, all there had lost a friend. And that loss was great. Every one's thoughts at once recurred to his labors, his services, and his death. To us the loss was sudden, but the change was not so to him who had just left us. Before mortal symptoms had presented themselves he had felt and said that his work was finished. It was not impossible to believe that God by his holy Spirit could impress his servant with the conviction that his work was done. It was consoling in this case to know that the Lord had not suddenly broken the ties that had bound him to earth. Thus he could quietly meet the approaching change, saying "My work is done," when the hand of disease was confirming his previous anticipations. How like PAUL! and there was much of the PAULINE in his character. How like Christ! He desired to meet those of his charge who had gone before to the general assembly and Church of the first born. He could leave the people he loved, because he loved his Lord more. Estimable as he was as a man, it was of grace, and not of man, that he was enabled to die thus—so peacefully and so hopefully—most of

those present had often heard him commend Christ. God made him to realize in his own experience that grace of which he had testified.

His death is a warning to Christians to be ready. Especially is it a warning to the unconverted. For, successful as his ministry had been, all of them had not accepted the Gospel. He had besought them with an affectionate solicitude and a holy earnestness never to be forgotten. Even amid the pains of death he had sent messages to his people. In your retirement forget not these.

The Rev. A. M. Reid, of the Female Seminary, then said: *

I should not speak in this presence, to-day, christian friends, but that I have a message entrusted to me, for his congregation, from our dear brother who is gone. When I was with him about noon of last Saturday, the day before he left us, he spoke freely of his death and his bright prospect beyond. After giving me messages of kindness and love for different members of our family, even to the youngest of the household, and for the young ladies of the Seminary in whom he always felt a deep interest, and of whom he often spoke as "the strangers in our midst," he said: "And my dear congregation, tell them how much I love them. My dear, dear people, I did not know how much I loved them. They have been very kind to me ever since I have been with them, bearing with my imperfections and short-comings. Ask them to forgive me if I have wronged any one of them in any wise. And I do freely forgive any who may have wronged me. And tell my dear congregation from their dying pastor's bed to give their hearts to Jesus. Oh, why will they reject my Saviour?"

My impenitent friends, you, who have long listened to that voice now silent can best answer that question: "Oh, why will they reject my Saviour?" Oh, my dying friends, let the stillness and silence of this solemn scene impress this last sad question of your dying pastor upon your hearts. You would not listen to his voice from that pulpit, will you not listen to his voice from this coffin? Oh, if his spirit could come here from heaven to-day and re-animate those cold lips, with what passionate earnestness would he beseech and urge you to give your hearts to Jesus. Rejectors of Jesus, if you would see your pastor again in yon bright world, listen to his last words, give your hearts to Jesus. If you would die like him triumphing over death, give your hearts to Jesus. I have seen him in many a joyous and happy hour, the most joyous of the joyful the happiest of the happy. God only knows the many pleasant hours we have spent together—for he enjoyed the higher and purer pleasures of social and religious life as much as any one. But I have never seen him so happy, in such a rapture of exalted happiness, as when, in the near prospect of death on last Saturday, he said, "I shall awake in His likeness. Oh, precious thought, to be like Jesus." Then clasping his hands, with light from heaven upon his face, he said:

"O glorious hour! O blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God."

He had not the shadow of a doubt as to the future. "To-morrow" said he, "is the first Sabbath of December and I shall spend it in heaven." He was anxious to depart and be with Christ which is far better. "Are you willing to die?" I said to him the night of his death. "O yes," he replied, "I am afraid I am impatient to be gone." The language of his heart in his last moments is well expressed in a hymn which was very dear to him.

"Let me go, the day is breaking,
Dear companions let me go."

And when the day was breaking his spirit took its upward flight and he did spend the first Sabbath of December in heaven as he had predicted. "Meet me in heaven," said he.—God grant that we all may meet him in heaven.

The Rev. Mr. Andrews, of the United Presbyterian Church, remarked:

That he felt constrained to say a word to magnify the grace of God, to cheer and animate. Five years ago he had come to this place, was most cordially received by brother Comingo. And from that hour to this he had found him the friend in whom he could confide and the brother he could love. On last Saturday evening he had gone to his room, and as he entered, the dying pastor exclaimed, "Almost home, come along brother, and bring your people with you." Two weeks ago, in this place the people, like Mary of old, had brought the alabaster-box and broken it. The perfume was grateful. And though an envious spirit might have said, why all this waste—why was not this sold and given to the poor? He could have replied, pointing to the clothes they had given him, "they have done this against my burial." He had often seen brother Comingo happy, but

*Mr R. furnished his remarks inserted, instead of the abstract in the Banner.

never in so much ecstacy of enjoyment as on last Saturday evening, when the silver cord was being loosed, and the golden bowl broken.

He was followed by the Rev. Mr. Abbott, of the Methodist Protestant church, who bore testimony to the generosity, worth, and christian character of the deceased.

The Rev. Dr. Jacobus, of the Western Theological Seminary, said:

At the risk of disturbing the impression now made, he must refer to another feature of the character of his dear departed brother. He had met him twenty-six years ago, in the Seminary at Princeton. He was a senior, I a junior. Then he was the same genial friend and devoted Christian as ever since. He was a man of public spirit in all great and good enterprises. He would be missed in the General Assembly and in the Synod; and especially would the members of Synod remember his holy earnestness at the last meeting. He would be missed in the Presbytery, at Washington College, and in the Western Theological Seminary. Is it possible that brother Comingo lies there? What a beautiful winding up of a quarter of a century. You met to receive his salutation, and give him those garments, not to preach in, as you fondly hoped, but to lie in death. How instructive the course of such a father, husband, and friend! How do our eyes follow this chariot, this horseman as he steps out of these vestments into heaven! Well do we remember when the last Convention met in Pittsburgh for prayer, with what a prayer he opened that solemn convocation; how he poured out his great soul. How appropriate his last texts! In the morning, "Peace be with you;" and in the afternoon, "Occupy till I come." And on Monday, when he felt the first attack of disease he had said, "How becoming if the Master should now take me home!" There was not a blight on his character—not a stain on his memory. He could say with the Apostle, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. May his blessed experience be ours. We are like soldiers in the army; some fall, and others must rush forward to take their places.

Prayer was then offered by the Rev. Mr. Swaney, of the Presbytery of Steubenville.—After which the 639th hymn was sung, and the benediction pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Morse, of the Episcopal Church.

At the close of these services, the vast assemblage, including Christians of all denominations and classes, even Jews, and those having no regard for any forms of religion, passed in front of the pulpit, with slow steps and tearful eyes, to behold for the last time on earth the face of him whom they all loved; and then the long procession took its way to the beautiful Cemetery, west of the city, where the body was committed to its resting place, till the resurrection,

The Rev. Henry G. Comingo, D. D., was a native of Kentucky, and a graduate of Centre College at Danville, in that State. Here, for a year after graduation, he acted as tutor, having for one of his pupils Ex-Vice President John C. Breckinridge, whose treason was a source of great pain and mortification to his former instructor. In the Theological Seminary at Princeton, he passed through the course. And now, after twenty-five years of successful pastoral labor, he has died, in the very midst of his usefulness, mourned by all who knew him. His church, his wife, and his orphan sons, have the sympathies and prayers of many—very many.

FUNERAL DISCOURSE:

PREACHED BY THE

REV. DR. CHARLES C. BEATTY,

ON SABBATH MORNING, DECEMBER 22ND, 1861.

REQUESTED BY MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."—Psalm 116: 15.

IN the midst of a world apostate and sinful, it is matter of consolation that there are some, though few, to be distinguished from others, and known as the excellent of the earth. These, the people of God, by whatever name they may be called:—are pointed out in the text as *his saints*. The eye of infinite wisdom discerns and separates them from the mass of human society, pronouncing "the righteous more excellent than his neighbor." (Prov. 12: 26.)

They are called *saints* as persons relatively or really holy; and this is their character. Men often lightly esteem them. But however they may be regarded, or disregarded by their fellow men, who are absorbed in things, in their own estimation, of greater importance, we know from the Scriptures, that God, (who seeth not as man seeth,) judges very differently, and regards them with special distinction, claiming them as *His* in a peculiar relation.

That which in this passage deserves your particular notice, because it marks the genuine import of the whole, is that the people of God are said emphatically to be *His* saints. It is true indeed that the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof. He says (Ezek. 18:4.) "Behold all souls are mine"—yet there is a sense:—very peculiar and precious;—in which the saints and they only are *His* people. It is that sense in which property is put for approbation, affection, delight and covenant relation. In many instances, and in various respects, is this appropriating language applied by the Lord in his word, to those who truly love, fear, and obey Him. According to these, they are *His* in the everlasting purpose of His love:—they are *His* by the purchase of the Redeemer's

blood:—they are *His* by the efficacious influences of His grace:—they are *His* by their own voluntary choice, and covenant engagement devoting themselves to His service:—they are *His* as He becomes the present and everlasting portion of their souls. It is in consequence of this relation that God orders all things for their good; bringing all events of His providence to subserve *their* benefit as well as His own glory. "All things are theirs &c. (1 Cor. 3:21-22.)

The saints of God are nevertheless, mortal and dying. They must go the way of all flesh. This is heavens righteous, and we may add, gracious decision. Death though at first laid as a curse upon man, is through God's mercy converted into a blessing toward His people, and becomes an event desirable from its consequences resulting in everlasting life, glory and blessedness. To him who feels "I would not live alway," this termination of earthly sorrows and sins:—this introduction to the bliss of heaven, is an event deeply interesting. And the Psalmist so regarding it, selects it from the catalogue of benefits which he might have recited, fixes his eye solely on this article, and exclaims "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the *death* of His saints." He does this not from its exclusive character, but because from some circumstance it *then* arrested his attention; and for a similar reason we now dwell upon it as the *theme* of our discourse.

I will endeavor to show briefly that the death of *His* saints is precious in the sight of the Lord:—

1. In respect to its time.
2. In regard to its circumstances.
3. In reference to its consequences.

The truths which I propose to exhibit, though exceedingly important, are so plain and undeniable to all who believe in a *particular* providence, and the declarations of God's word, as to leave no room for doubt. It becomes me, then, rather to furnish matter for serious and profitable meditation than consume the short time in unnecessary reasoning or superfluous illustration.

1. The death of His saints is precious in the sight of the Lord in respect to its time.

All events are at the disposal of the righteous Governor of the Universe. Every hair of our head is numbered, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly father (Luke 12: 6.)—He hath determined the times, and the bounds of every man's habitation. (Acts 17: 26.) Whether men be therefore the friends

or foes of God, their life while it continues is upheld by Him, and their death, when it happens, takes place by His permission and direction. But there is an important difference; and the christian may say with a special propriety, in the language of the Psalmist, (31-15,) "My times are in thy hand." Those who are God's children have the present and comfortable assurance that He watcheth over them with a fatherly care, and that all things shall work together for their good (Rom. 8: 28.) Their life will be prolonged so far as they themselves, if they were fully enlightened, would ever wish for its continuance; and their death will be ordered at the most seasonable time that infinite wisdom can devise. Though ignorant themselves, and unfit to make a choice, their whole destiny is in the hands of an omniscient, gracious father; and infinite wisdom, combined with infinite goodness, is engaged to choose for them, the *very best period* for their departure from the world. *Here faith rests in confidence.*

While God has a work for His servants to perform;—while He judges that their continuance here will conduce to their real and ultimate benefit, He will effectually protect them from the assaults of death however formidable. They are immortal till their work is done. The methods of preservation are various but calculated to secure the object. The most absolute determinations of God do not supercede, but include in them, the operation of second causes. Therefore the truly pious man makes it his business under a confidence in God's care, to be in the diligent and constant use of every suitable and lawful means for the preservation of his life, and then steadfastly to pursue the path of duty, and cheerfully to commit the event to God, who will never fail to preserve him until the fittest time for his dissolution be fully come. (Job 14:14.)

It follows too, that when this period has really arrived, the Father of mercies will surely take His children to Himself, however inauspicious the time may *seem* to human eye, however reluctantly those who remain may yield to the dispensation, however fondly they may have hoped, and however fervently have prayed, that it might be otherwise. All true prayer is made with the qualification "Not as I will, but as thou wilt."

God alone is the proper judge when it is the most fit and convenient to remove His children to the mansions of eternal rest.—The order of His providence in this respect is various. Sometimes even to our eye, ignorant, short-sighted and selfish as we

are, there seems a propriety in the time which God appoints, but more frequently this is hidden from our view. The eminently pious, and those with great prospects of usefulness are sometimes seen to take their departure at an early age. Many persons of distinguished abilities and religion are cut off, in what appears to man's eye, the midst of their years. Of this we have most affecting instances. The dispensation may be mysterious and beyond our ability now to explain. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. (John 13: 7.) God's thoughts are not ours, but they are infinitely higher and better. He may take away the righteous from the evil to come. He may intend to teach us that He needs not the instrument, which we esteem the most suitable to do his work. He may do it to instruct us that we should enter upon our fondest endeavors even for the promoting of His glory with entire resignation to His disposal, and the lively recollection that we may not be permitted to finish our designs, so that what we sow another may reap. He may design and make it the means of more extensive and permanent good to the living than all their labors would have been; to teach to survivers the duty of submission to His will, and perhaps convince them in the result, how unprepared they are to practice it. Or he may purpose thereby to accomplish some great and blessed end which we do not now think of, and which shall only be revealed to us in the light of heaven. But, whatever may be His design in regard to the living, we know that in all such cases the dead receive an unspeakably precious benefit. Their anxieties and labors on earth are happily exchanged for an eternal repose and triumph in heaven.

2. We shall now consider, somewhat more directly, what has already been in a measure anticipated, that the death of His saints is precious in the sight of the Lord, in regard to its circumstances.

We have indeed, my brethren, no assurance that the circumstances which surround the death of the good man shall be such as are most desirable to our natural feelings. It may be in ways most trying and dismaying. But the promise on which the believer trusts is "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness," (2 Cor. 12: 9.) and the truth of this he will not fail to experience, no matter what the circumstances which accompany his exit from life.

"Sure the last end
Of the good man is peace. How calm his exit,
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground,
Nor weary worn out winds expire so soft."

Some are called out of time into eternity in an easy and gradual manner; in other instances the vital cord is suddenly cut or snapt asunder. In the departure of some the pillow of death is smoothed and softened by a thousand alleviations—kindred, family and friends left in health, wealth and safety, and placed in circumstances of the most comfortable and desirable kind, and the last farewell is taken without a distressing thought concerning their future. In other cases how different! The loved ones they leave behind may be sick and helpless, without the prospect of earthly support, exposed to suffering and without religion; the good man, even in his last moments, cannot but have many an anxious care for their future comfort and their eternal welfare.

In spiritual as well as temporal respects there is also a variety attending the death-bed of christians, which by no means at first view seems to be encouraging. Here one chooses for him wiser than himself, and infinitely regardful of his welfare, but who often keeps hidden the reasons of His choice. Some truly have such clear and animating views of their interest in the Saviour, and of the glorious state on which they are about to enter, that they die in transport and triumph. Death then is the most desirable event that they ever contemplated. Some though wanting in these exhilarating cordials to the soul, have yet a firm and unshaken confidence in God's favor, and a pleasing prospect of the future. Some are merely composed and tranquil. Some vibrate between hope and fear. Some perhaps are surprised into heaven, when they scarcely dared to expect it; their sun set under a dark and gloomy cloud: and some awake and find themselves there after a delirium or a torpor which had benumbed or suspended the powers of the soul.

Do you ask: If there be such a variety in this most interesting concern, and especially if such distresses are suffered by God's people, at the time of their decease: How can it be that all the circumstances of it are precious in His sight, and ordered in His mercy? This is my answer: God seeth not as man seeth. He has infinitely wise and gracious reasons for all these allotments, though He may not see fit to display them to us. His benevolence is not a weak and changeable pity. Were it so, and did it yield to all the desires and feelings even of His own children, some of them would scarcely enter into their rest at all. They are often seen clinging, in the weakness of their faith, with the greatest tenacity to the world, and their Heavenly Father is

obliged to force them away—to force them to be happy. In the variety which takes place in regard to dying comforts, infinite wisdom has doubtless kind purposes to answer, which we at present are unable to discern, and utterly unfit to appreciate. Yet this one thing we may know and that most surely, that God takes special care that all these circumstances are regulated by infinite love, for their final and greater benefit.

But how evidently, even to our imperfect vision, have; in the case of our departed brother, the circumstances been ordered as precious in the sight of the Lord. What more befitting than at the close of a quarter century of active and successful labor:—when the congratulatory salutations had just passed between him and his people; after the celebrating of that anniversary which had been so earnestly anticipated, and so pleasantly enjoyed.—And when, too, with the feelings which disposed him to say "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," and, as it were, the strong presentiment, more than once expressed that his work was perhaps closed:—and which induced him to say, after preaching, on the last Sabbath, "How becoming if the Master should *now* take me home."—And then those sermons, which were his last, so interesting, so instructive, so appropriate if he had known surely that they were to be the last; giving his pastoral benediction, "Peace be unto you," (John 20: 19) and the admonition of his last charge. "Occupy till I come." (Luke 19: 13.) How fit! How beautiful!

And in all the Lord was very gracious. God did not suddenly or violently break the ties which bound him to earth. There was a preparation for it. He looked from the beginning of his illness that he should go hence; and he was ready. He could and did look calmly, even in all his uneasiness, oppression and pain, upon the approach of death. It had no terrors to him. In regard to his views in the earlier part of his sickness, he said.—Though I have not those bright and joyful feelings which I wish, yet "I know in whom I have believed," &c. But these views grew brighter and brighter, till he said "almost home, brother, almost home; to-morrow I shall spend in heaven." And then so desired and triumphant a death in such happy circumstances, made it almost like the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof to this dear servant of the Lord.

What desirable surroundings were these! How peaceful and happy an exit from this dark world of sin! The sun has gone

down beyond the western hill in its glorious effulgence; and in the calm sweetness of the summer's evening, the bright radiance of its setting beams sheds roseate hues on all the sky, even on the light clouds behind, which hover over.

But is this all, and are its rays now quenched forever? No.—If a man die, shall he live again? Yes. An immortal life is brought to light in the gospel of Christ. This is not the end.

3. We are most certainly assured that the death of His saints is precious in the sight of the Lord with reference to all its consequences.

To this, no doubt, the Psalmist had a principal view in the words before us. Precious indeed, indescribably precious, will be the issues of death, which a faithful and loving God will bring about to all His people. And is not this the main consideration? Often does the solemn scene, or the circumstances attending it, become an opportunity to survivors, friends and others, tending to their conversion or sanctification as well as the honor of religion. And this precious effect is not to be overlooked. But we speak particularly of its result to the saint himself. "As it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Cor. 2: 9.) It will take an eternity, my friends, fully to learn what are the riches of the inheritance of the saints in light. There is scarce time to glance at this as revealed in the gospel.

Here we learn that one of the precious consequences of their death is an immediate cessation from all sorrows. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. 7: 17.) No more shall trouble or anxiety disturb their peaceful breast.—To be entirely free from the remainder of sin is another of the happy consequences of death to the saints. The soul rises pure and spotless to God and the mansions of holiness, never again to be infected with sin or even vexed by temptations. Here, too, it is admitted to the immediate vision of God, and of the Lamb. Neither is the rest which remaineth for the people of God an inactive and inglorious one, but all their powers enlarged and purified, shall be employed with delightful constancy in obedience and praise.—And as we have reason to believe that all the capacities of the soul will be not only preserved, but extended and invigorated, it is pleasing to think how memory will be employed in the mansions in heaven, in retracing, with wonder and glad surprise, the

past scenes of life. How different will then appear to the saint, in the light of eternity, the things of time. He will review with astonishment his unreasonable fears, groundless apprehensions, his unbelief, want of confidence in God, and misapprehensions of His dispensations. Ah! how will he discover with gratitude the kind designs of a faithful God in all the scenes of life, and the circumstances of death:—even in those events which while on earth appeared most inexplicable;—and a light will then glow around those places here dark to his mind, which will transport his soul with grateful joy, and raise the notes of his praise, in the fulness of divine love, towards him a sinner.

The creation of God appears to be in all its parts a system of gradation and subordination. There are different orders of angels, and there will be, as we gather from scripture, different orders of saints. But this, where the will of the Lord, the sovereign, is the only fountain of happiness, will give greater delight to all, and in no respect diminish it in any. All will perceive and rejoice in the reasons of this distinction. Those who have labored, and loved, and sacrificed, and suffered much, in the cause of God, will be greatly distinguished. While a cup of cold water given to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, shall not pass without its reward; he that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways shall be more highly honored; and they that have turned many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever. (Dan. 12: 3.) Faithful ministers of God's word, who have worn out their lives in His service, and have passed away whether earlier or later, will appear as stars of the first magnitude in the heaven of unfading glory. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints, in these happy results.

In the language of a modern poet, who sings "the Course of time and final doom of man."

"Oh who can speak his praise! great, humble man!
He in the current of destruction stood
And warned the sinner of his woe; led on
Immanuel's members, in the evil day;
And, with the everlasting arms embraced
Himself around, stood in the dreadful front
Of battles, high, and warred victoriously
With death and hell. And now has come his rest,
His triumph day. And round him gathered, clad
In white, the vouchers of his ministry—
The flock, his care had nourished, fed and saved.

Illustrious, like the sun,
In that assembly, he, shining from far,
Most excellent in glory, stands assured,
Waiting the promised crown, the promised throne,

The welcome and approval of his Lord.

The faithful minister of God:—
See where he walks on yonder mount, that lifts
Its summit high, on the right hand of bliss,
Sublime in glory, talking with his peers
Of the incarnate Saviour's love, and past
Affliction lost in present joy! See how
His face with heavenly ardor glows, and how
His hand enraptured strikes the golden lyre!
As now conversing of the Lamb, once slain
He speaks—of conflicts o'er and glorious victories
Achieved through faith."

I see *him* there,
Our brother, pastor, friend so well beloved,
Joining the glorious throng in praise of God.

Yes, among them, that dear departed one who so lately filled this place, we doubt not now stands. And what remains for us is seriously and gratefully to record that grace of God which made him what he was on earth, and then removed him hence to Heaven. Time will not permit, did my abilities warrant it, and the materials allow, more than to give an imperfect sketch of the life and character of the departed pastor of this church. But to those who knew him so well, it is almost superfluous for me to testify of his worth; the piety and single purpose of his life, and the earnest and conscientious discharge of his ministerial duties.

The Rev. Henry G. Comingo was born near Harrodsburg, Ky., on the 2d of February, 1809. He was descended from a pious ancestry, originally from Holland, but more recently emigrating from New York to Kentucky. His grandparents, with others of the same stock, seem to have come to that vicinity as a colony, with their minister of the Reformed Dutch church, the Rev. Mr. Labagh, and a place of worship was erected by them, (known for some reason as the Mud Meeting House.) But the minister having returned to the East, and no one succeeding him, the church organization fell into decay, and the condition of things was unfavorable to the piety of the survivors, who did not readily enter into other church relations.

The parents of Mr. C. did not make a profession of religion until after that he had. His education was rather moral, than religious. He was their eldest child, and his uniting with the church made such an impression on their minds that they soon became members also. The rest of the family seem to have followed the religious inclination which was given *to him*, when he made a profession of religion in the Presbyterian church. At what particular date this was made, or under what circumstances,

we are not informed; but it was under the ministry of the excellent and talented Cleland, whom he ever held in the highest regard; and probably when he was not more than 18 years of age.

Soon after becoming a professed follower of Christ, Mr. Comingo felt a strong desire and call to the ministry, and wished to enter upon a course of study preparatory to that work. Though he met with no countenance then, from his parents, but the contrary, yet God raised up other friends to encourage and aid him in this excellent desire; especially Judge Green, of Danville, in whose family he resided during his college course. Of his early religious history we have no particular account, nor of the circumstances of his entering college, or how long he was a student there. It was several years. At Danville he commenced and completed his course. He was a diligent student, universally esteemed for his kindness of heart and devoted piety. He graduated at Centre College in 1832, with much credit, receiving the appointment of delivering the valedictory to his class; not so much on account of superiority to others in scholarship, as a compliment paid to his diligence in study, his estimable character generally, and his abilities as an earnest, pathetic speaker.*

While at College his whole walk and demeanor was exemplary; and he exerted a fine christian influence upon all with whom he was associated, whether religious or not. Though standing well in his class, he was chiefly eminent for his decided and consistent piety, and his kind and genial disposition and manners. He was always ready to take part in meetings for social worship, and for every good work. His religion was of a sound, substantial and earnest character, that commanded the respect of the most thoughtless students; and it was, at the same time, of a cheerful and attractive kind, in the reality of which all had confidence. His vacations were spent in Bible distribution in destitute regions, in visiting and addressing Sabbath Schools, in holding prayer meetings, exhorting, delivering lectures on temperance, and such other services as might be useful: while it was always manifest that his aim was to glorify God in efforts to lead men to lives of piety.—Such was his christian character, that from the time of his profession, none who were acquainted with him, even for a little season, had need to ask if he was a member of the church. His life was a living epistle. (2 Cor. 3: 2, 3.)

After his graduation, he was appointed a Tutor in the College

* I give the testimony of cotemporaries.

at Danville, where he taught with much acceptance for the ensuing year or perhaps longer. In the Spring of 1834 he went on to Princeton, to attend the Theological Seminary. While there his character, and course, and standing, was similar to that at College. He was a favorite with the Professors, and with the better class of students. While attending the Seminary he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of New Brunswick, Feb. 3, 1836. He remained, however, to the close of his course of theological studies; and in the succeeding Autumn came to Steubenville, under the following circumstances.

In consequence of the ill-health of the then pastor of this church, he had tendered his resignation in the Fall of 1835. This was declined, but the congregation agreed to employ an asststant, and for this purpose called Mr. E. T. McLean, who, after preaching a few months,—when about to be ordained in the Spring of 1836, was seized with such symptoms of pulmonary disease, as made necessary his immediate removal to a southern climate, greatly to the regret of this people. Mr. McLean had been a fellow student of Mr. Comingo, both at College and the Seminary, and spoke favorably of him as a suitable successor. In the course of the Autumn, having it suggested to him by the venerable Dr. Miller, and an invitation having been extended to him to visit the church, and spend some time as an assistant to the pastor, he came in November, and preached during the winter.

Mr. Comingo was then a young man just from his theological studies; but he made a most favorable impression, especially by his agreeable manners, and his earnestness and devotedness to his work. He entered upon his ministry, with a zeal for his master's cause, and the conversion of sinners, which suffered no diminution for the twenty-five years that he continued among us. It was not long before he began to see the blessing of the Lord, in the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the ingathering of souls, as the fruit of his labors.

On the same day that this congregation agreed to accept my resignation as pastor, it was voted to call Mr. Comingo, as my successor. At the stated Spring meeting, (April 4th,) the Presbytery having first acted upon the pastor's resignation, immediately received and handed over the call to Mr. Comingo, who had just been received from the Presbytery of New Brunswick; and he, having accepted the same, was ordained and installed pastor, on the 24th May, 1837.

Mr. Comingo was an industrious and successful minister: and eminently a man of faith and prayer. Though during his whole course scrupulously diligent and faithful in the discharge of all duties as a pastor, he had a felt and deep consciousness that without the Divine blessing all his labors would be in vain. Hence his earnest, fervent, wrestling prayers with God, not only in public, as you often heard them, but in private,—for the power of the Holy Spirit. And that blessing was, again and again, vouchsafed to the people of his charge.

A particular review of his pastorate having been so recently and so fully made on his 25th anniversary, it will not be repeated. In the year 1855, Mr. C.'s health being seriously impaired, he was induced to take a voyage to Europe. This did not, at first, produce the beneficial results expected; and in view of his protracted absence, and gloomy prospects of health, as well as on account of discouraging accounts of his congregation received, he was led to tender his resignation: this the people, with great unanimity and cordiality, refused to accept. He returned in the early part of 1856, apparently with recovered health, and entered upon his duties again, with renewed earnestness and ability. But it is doubtful whether he ever was so well as previously. There seemed a weakening of the chest, which appeared in greater liability to colds and affections of the throat and breast. Occasionally some among the people complained of his frequent absences from home: yet they could not know the need which he had for recreation, and for the recuperation of those powers, which were run down by the unabated diligence with which, when at home, he performed all his pastoral duties.

How these duties were done, you, my dear friends, well know. For twenty-five years he had broken to this congregation the bread of life, and gone in and out before them in all the sweet relations of a pastor to his flock;—uniting them in marriage, baptizing their little ones, and some of these same lambs of the flock in after years admitting to the full communion of the church, conversing with the anxious, directing inquirers to the cross, watching at the sick bed, and whispering peace to the dying, burying the dead, consoling in sorrow:—weeping with those that wept, and rejoicing with those that rejoiced: *all* with an earnest fidelity and devotedness of soul, in true sympathy, as you have known and experienced; but which I truly tell you is rarely equalled, still less excelled even among the best ministers of our church. And

all because it was a service of love, from his whole heart he loved his work and his people as men seldom love: and this was felt, and expressed even in his dying hours.

But his twenty-five years of ministerial work were now completed. He had looked forward to its anniversary with desire, and he enjoyed it greatly as the spontaneous act of a beloved people. Little did they imagine in presenting him with a token of their affection for a pastor of so long standing, that, as one well said, they were anointing him for his burial, and that the handsome apparel presented to him for his service in the sanctuary, would be so soon the habiliments of the grave. "Against the day of his burial, they had done this. (John 12: 7.) It was not our expectation:—but all was fully known to Him, who seeth the end, even from the very beginning.

That week was to him one of great enjoyment; especially as he rejoiced with others, yet it was with a subdued and chastened spirit, as though it was the last. On the Sabbath I was so happy as to have heard those two discourses with which he wound up his ministry among you, and to which I have before alluded. He was not well then, though the first serious symptoms of his disease did not appear till Monday. When it came, it was a most violent attack, and soon beyond the reach of medical aid. Such was God's ordering. He sank rapidly, though without losing strength of body or mind, retaining his faculties even to the close of life, and able to converse, though not very audibly or easily, until the very last.

From the first he anticipated the results; and said he should not recover; but he cheerfully acquiesced in the Divine will, looking to a speedy admission to his father's house in heaven. Towards the last he not only expressed a desire to depart, yes, that he would rejoice to be gone; but that it would be a great disappointment to him, if he should not go: and that he was afraid indeed that he was impatient to be released and be at rest.

He had no anxiety about those whom he left behind him. "I know," said he, "that the Lord will abundantly provide for my wife and children." Though not in the beginning enjoying those bright views and hopes which he longed for:—there was no fear, no doubt; but a calm and tranquil frame. "I know," said he, "in whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him." But his views gained brightness and joyousness every day and almost every hour, until he could say to

one, not only pleasantly but triumphantly—"Almost home, brother, almost home. To-morrow I shall be in heaven."

It would be impossible to repeat all or much of what he said to those present, or the messages sent to friends, some of whom he expected would follow him at no distant time. He talked much, and seemed anxious to speak to all about him, his mind being active, elevated and happy; and often asked his brethren to pray with him, and them and others to sing.

Of himself he said, "I have been a poor miserable sinner, but God has been merciful, very merciful. I have been unfaithful, but God has graciously owned my labors."

Often did he remember, and much and tenderly did he speak of his congregation. To one of the elders he said very earnestly, when speaking of the selection of another pastor, (and it was equally a charge to all his people,)—"*Do not be hasty.*" Pray very faithfully and a great deal over it. Let the Lord choose for you. And then he himself followed with a prayer that the Lord would choose and send a pastor, after his own heart—one that would win souls to Christ. To another he said: "Give my love to my people, my dear, *dear* people; my *first* and *only* love." And again: "My dear congregation. I did not know how much I loved them. Tell them how much I love them. They have been very kind to me, ever since I have been with them, bearing with my faults and shortcomings. Ask them to forgive me, if I have wronged any one of them, in any wise; and I do freely forgive any who have wronged me, I entirely forgive them all." And then he sent his messages to those who have continued impenitent. "Tell them, from their pastor's dying bed, to give their hearts unreservedly to Jesus. Oh, why will they reject my Saviour."

Though the night gathered round, it was light in his soul. As he neared the eternal world, visions of heaven seemed to break in upon him. "I shall awake" said he "in Christ's likeness. Oh, precious thought, to be like Jesus. To-morrow is the first Sabbath of December, and I shall spend it in heaven."

"O, glorious hour! O, blest abode!
I shall be near, and like my God."

And so it was to be—the next morning—the morning of the holy, blessed Sabbath:—about half past six o'clock,—just as the day was breaking:—his spirit passed away, from earth to heaven.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, *Write*, Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord, from henceforth; yea,

saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." (Rev. 14: 13.)

It is exceedingly difficult and delicate to speak, on such an occasion as this, in a truly becoming manner, faithfully yet modestly, of the character and worth of a departed pastor. The language of eulogy, which the personal feelings of the speaker might dictate, and the affectionate regards of a sorrowing congregation expects, would perhaps be displeasing in the sight of that Holy One, who will not give his glory to another. Yet as our beloved brother often said, and always practiced, we should never speak ill of the absent;—least of all of the dead. Surely in this time of our grief we cannot even remember faults in the departed: and he himself would be the readiest to attribute every excellence to divine grace. We desire to avoid every excess, and to utter, in sobriety, such things as are true and faithful.

Having, then, narrated briefly some events of his life, let us proceed, in this spirit, to speak of the traits of his character as a *man*, as a *christian*, and as a *minister of the gospel*.

The first thing which strikes us in considering him, as a man, was the geniality of his temper: his happy, cheerful and cheering nature; his winning manner of intercourse in life. There was something in his first approaches even to a stranger, so open, so frank, so hearty:—as to make a most favorable impression, and gain an access and a confidence which was very unusual. It was remarkable, not only in reference to the general mass of mankind, to whom affability is a virtue, which always gives an introduction: but to those higher and more exclusive sets, which stand upon ceremony, yet which were favorably impressed with the ardor of his nature and the heartiness of his manner. And one reason for this with them was, that it always was connected with the gentlemanly bearing of one who had such a self-reliance as never to be thrown into awkwardness or embarrassment; and yet so much true modesty as never to be chargeable with obtrusiveness. Accustomed to good society, he always felt at home in such, and made himself acceptable and interesting. And by the amiableness of his general deportment, and the urbanity of his manners, he retained what he had gained on his first approaches.

He was a scholar from education, and the cultivation of his mind; not profound or professional, but varied and expansive; and his stores of information were always so at his command, as to be upon all proper occasions ready for use, to himself and others; the

great advantage for which learning is valuable. Not a student, in the exclusive sense, yet who made himself somewhat acquainted with almost every subject, and could and did bring the powers of his mind to bear more fully upon those topics which he deemed of greater importance to his work, and standing in society. As a tribute of respect to his talents, his acquirements, and his character, the College at Danville conferred on him the honorary title of Doctor of Divinity, about two or three years ago.

He loved society, and shone in it; with a fine flow of spirits himself, he inspired life to all about him; cheerful and companionable, he drew forth the conversational powers of others. As one well said, he had a peculiar and happy faculty of extracting the gold and sunshine from every thing. His temperament was ardent, and it was carried into all his modes of thinking, speaking and acting. It was readily seen and felt that he was a man of impulse, but to those who knew him it was most evident that these impulses though warm were generous; and though in the heat of his sentiments and feelings his impetuosity sometimes hurried him to expressions and actions from which a calculating judgment would have preserved him, yet behind and underneath there were no feelings of bitterness or malignity. Never did he appear desirous or even willing, by word or deed, to injure a human being. He did not cautiously guard himself against misapprehension by others, because he was unsuspecting himself; and anxious not to give offence to any, he was never ready to take offence at the banter of another. His wit was never severe or sarcastic, but playful; provocative of spirited and pleasant reply, but not of anger or pain of heart. Indeed, such was the natural kindness of his disposition, or that gracious charity which thinketh no evil, that he could not bear to hear ill spoken of another, and was hopeful in thought and word even of the doubtful. He readily recollected the good in the character and course of others, and was prompt with the most favorable construction, sanguine for good—but if faults came to his memory they were seldom permitted to gain body from his lips. Finally, he was remarkably free from every manifestation of selfishness, and from all that was mean, narrow, vulgar or contracted.

We might further consider him as the affectionate husband, the kind father, the good neighbor, the warm hearted and fast friend, the patriotic citizen, and as always carrying with him, into all companies, the amenities of social life. Indeed, on one point, as

a friend, true, firm and constant, as well as a companion and associate, my personal feelings tempt me strongly to expatiate—yet I forbear. Few men had more true friends and warm friends—all over the country—than HENRY G. COMINGO.

On one thing I remark for a moment: It was his intense interest for his country in the present crisis. He was not only a loyal and faithful citizen, but a patriot in the truest sense of that word, as it is a part of religion; sympathizing deeply in the distraction and distresses of his country; never hesitating to designate the course of the rebels against the Government, as most wicked and flagitious; and especially mourning over those of his friends and acquaintance who had cast in their lot with the Southern Confederacy. To the last moment of his life he watched with painful solicitude the dark cloud which had gathered over us as a nation. His most constant and earnest prayers were for his country's welfare; for in God was his trust. He was deeply oppressed with a view of the future, and among his last earnest outcries upon his dying bed—was "Oh, my country! my country, my poor country! what is to become of it ?"

In the second place, I delight to speak of his character as a *christian.* With all his other excellencies, even as a man, which seemed largely to partake of and flow from christian feeling; I have ever been in the habit, both in thought and word, of placing, in the very forefront, his religious character. From the first of my acquaintance with him I was convinced that he was a man of God, and from this conviction never wavered. His religion, though partaking of the natural temperament as a man, and both of them modifying, somewhat, the other, was nevertheless a vital principle in his heart, influencing all the springs of feeling, thought and action. This was evident, not so much from any profession of it by the lips, for our brother was not wont to speak often or at large of his own experiences, or exercises of mind, either present or past, except as they seemed to come up in the course of general remark; but there was in this a spontaniety which evinced that it flowed from the abundance of a heart imbued with divine light and love; and this was sustained by that course of consistent conduct, and natural flow of pious sentiments, which showed that he lived near to God. We have but little knowledge of the inner life and workings of divine grace in his own soul, except what was casually manifested, and yet this was so constant, and unforced, as clearly to show us where his heart

was, and where his communings had been. His piety was scriptural, evangelical, experimental, actuating and regular. Usually it was cheeeful, hopeful and happy; though occasionally he would have his dark and even desponding hours, (more on account of his church and his labors than his own hope,) and these were lightened by his habit and resource of prayer. I mean secret and devotional prayer; and those who have marked his unusual unction in this exercise in public, cannot doubt that he gained it by his intimate converse with God in the closet.

His religion was not professional, or occasional, but a sincere and constant, living and actuating principle; as was evident to all those who came most nearly in contact with him; for it was always there; continually beaming forth in words and deeds which had their vitalizing source, evidently, in the love of God, and love of souls.

He was a man of faith. He had great confidence in God. The promises of the Scripture, and the grace of the Saviour, were the foundations upon which he built his hope, not only for his own salvation, but of others—for the church—his country—the world.

Another characteristic of his christianity was its catholicity.—Firmly attached as he was to his own church, and to its doctrines and worship, after an intelligent consideration of them, yet there was nothing in his feelings narrow, intolerant or bigotted. He embraced, in the arms of his christian affection, all whom he thought Christ's true disciples, wherever found, and he was very ready and easy to find them. He had no feeling which would confine his christian charities to the pale of his own denomination, but had a hand and heart open to all; feeling a deep interest in the prosperity of God's work under whatever denominational form it was carried forward, and especially interested in the various churches in this place, uniting with them in all good works, most readily and cordially.

It only remains to me to speak of Dr. Comingo, as a *Minister of the Gospel.* For this office he had always a high regard, and thought no one should enter it but one called of God in his providence and by his Spirit; and who did not devote himself wholly to it. From the beginning of his christian life, *this* was his own thought, and *this* his purpose. He had laid a foundation for the due exercise of its functions in a thorough preparation, both collegiate and theological, and to its duties he brought his whole heart and soul, and devoted all his resources. Higher than to be

an able and faithful minister of the Lord Jesus, he had no aspirations, and because he felt that there was no higher calling. He then gave himself fully to this work, deeming that as it filled his heart, so it might fill his hands. His learning various, if not profound, was all made subservient to his office; and he only desired to enrich his mind, and increase his attainments, that he might be better qualified to discharge all its multiform duties.

As a preacher, there was a very remarkable combination of his characteristics as a man and a christian, and the employment of them in his work. These peculiarities were clearly distinguishable in his labors; especially his ardent temperament; earnest manner, and sanguine hopefulness. His great and constant aim, in preaching the gospel, was to win souls to Christ. For this purpose he put forth all his power. He was unequal in his efforts, and those most labored were not always the most successful. Indeed it was not abroad, but at home, among his own people, that he appeared the best. His forte was, not in argumentation, much less controversial or even doctrinal discourses, but in warm and pungent addresses to the heart and conscience. He was fully instructed in the system of theology, and was never wanting in the presentment, full and plain, of the great truths of evangelical religion, yet this was rather incidental and unavoidable, than regular and systematic, and only, or principally, as it subserved his great design, through the understanding to reach the inward springs of emotion and action. Hence his style and manner, characterized by great affection, was, with occasional exceptions only, rather hortatory than didactic. His warm sympathetic heart, combining with the love of perishing souls, gave a peculiar tenderness and emotional tone to his pleadings with sinners, and his presentations of Christ to the awakened. Christ, as his own Saviour, he ardently desired to have formed in the hearts of all his hearers as the hope of glory; upon which theme he was never weary of dwelling. And then his prayers—his soul breathing and soul affecting prayers—who of us has not felt their moving influence upon his soul?

God had given him a dignified and commanding presence, and a voice clear, easily inflected, and in its higher modulations and more earnest tones, exceedingly thrilling; and then his whole body, as well as soul, seemed working in the utterance of those addresses, which he made to his hearers, on the great interests of their salvation. All of you know the power of his graphic de-

scriptions of the sinner's doom, and have felt the earnestness and overwhelming force of those eloquent appeals which he made to the impenitent, to turn from his way to the Saviour. And this impressed his heart even at the last, when he sent his message.—"Tell them from their dying pastor's bed to give their hearts, unreservedly, to Jesus. Oh! why will they reject my Saviour!" and to the messenger, "Live near the cross, dear brother," said he.—"Labor earnestly for the salvation of souls. That is the great thing."

But it was his desire, and design, to declare to men the whole counsel of God; to keep back nothing which was profitable to the spiritual interests of his people. And this reminds me, of that which was most evident, that however much he felt for the conversion of the world, the salvation of sinners in general, yet his heart and interest circled round the people of his charge, with a peculiar force. They had been particularly and solemnly committed to his care; and he expected to account for them in the great day. He was pre-eminently *their* pastor. He loved his charge with a special love. His very affection at times made him unhappy. When difficulties and misunderstandings arose among, and with them, and some did not manifest that regard for him which he desired and longed for, he was jealous of their affection, and thought they did not appreciate and sympathize with him, as they might, and should. The difficulties with, and coldness of any among his people, was to him the occasion of the sharpest pain and discouragement which he ever felt; and this because he had given to them *all his* heart.

And then, not only in the pulpit, but especially in family visitation and personal address on the subject of religion, how happy and successful was he. There was a most enviable facility and felicity with which religious conversation was introduced or intermingled with his social intercourse:—not forced, but springing up most naturally and easily, as that which lay uppermost in his mind and heart. This really was the secret of much of his success; not so much or mainly from his set discourses and pulpit exercises alone, but from these, in connection with the intercourse of daily life, the casual observation, the constant breaking forth of a christian influence; the leading of an awakened or serious mind to the Saviour's love.

But I must forbear. We might also speak of his public spirit which made him fill an important place in the courts and councils

of the church, especially the Presbytery and Synod; where his voice was often heard and his efforts given for the diffusion of truth, and the building up of the Redeemer's kingdom. Here his kindness of heart drew his brethren to him with confiding affection. In these bodies the occasional addresses, exhortations, and stirring appeals of brother COMINGO were always highly appreciated as among his happiest efforts.

I might also refer to his hearty and earnest co-operation in the educational efforts of Washington College and the Western Theological Seminary, both of which will miss him from their Boards. Nor can we—nor shall we forget the interest which he felt in, and the aid he gave to the Female Seminary at home, displayed even to the last, when he sent his last—his dying message. "Tell the dear girls to be good and love Jesus."

How many interests—how many circles—how many hearts will feel his loss. But God still lives—the only sure and certain, unfailing and everlasting stay, support, portion and joy of the soul. Mortal friends must die; all earthly things will pass away; the brightest scenes below will fade; and we, ourselves, are changing too:—*But God*, our God, the living God, will never, never change. He is the same—yesterday—to-day and *forever*.

And now, my dear friends, in the summing up of all these things:—our first and highest sentiment should be that of gratitude to God;—for such a pastor—so long continued among us, and with so much profit: and then so delightfully—yes, I must say, so *delightfully*, removed to his master's house in heaven. To God be all the praise. It was His grace which made our brother what he was, which was truly excellent:—it was His goodness which prolonged his life, and continued him here, amid not a few discouragements, for so long as to fulfill his quarter of a century, and permitted him and you to enjoy that anniversary. And to God's mercy and love be it ascribed, that at so befitting a time and in such opportune circumstances, he was made to ascend from earth to heaven in so comfortable and triumphant a manner. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."—Once more we say, "Let God have all the praise."

In the review, while we would not forget that our brother was a man of like passions with us, and subject to the common infirmities of human nature;—that he doubtless had faults and failings, errors, even sins, which we do not now recall; *yet* we rejoice that his life was so pure, so consistent, so lovely:—that there is nothing

to vitiate the sweet savor of his memory, and, *so much* to shed brightness upon our review of his character and course. Blessed be God, for our memory of the departed.

What a rich legacy has he left to his family and his friends. A good name, rather to be chosen than great riches. (Prov. 22: 1.)—Yes, a good name is better than precious ointment. (Eccles 7: 1.) The example and precepts to which they can revert: and the prayers on their behalf which he treasured up in heaven. "I can" said he, "leave my wife and children, confidently with God."

To those of this congregation or assembly who are yet impenitent, I would say that his last message was to you. "Ah, why will they reject my Saviour?" *Oh, why?* "Would you not die the death of the righteous? Would you not have your last end like his?" Then let the life of the righteous be yours. *Turn.*—Turn to God.

And you, the members of this church; the elders—the deacons—every communicant. Shall you not so live that you may meet your beloved pastor in the realms of light? Live near to God.—Neglect not the means of grace, and especially the weekly lecture, to which he attached so much importance. Prepare to follow, you know not how soon.

We mourn his loss; but let us imitate his example, and apply the lessons of his life. A voice seems to linger in this sanctuary: and sounds from this sacred desk. "Remember the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you."

Ah yes, he has gone; but it is

> To sit down with the prophets, by the clear
> And chrystal waters; he has gone to join
> The Song of the Redeemed; and to walk
> With Hoge and Hening, Hallock and the host
> Of the just men, made perfect.

Already has he met with those of his charge who went before, and as time passes on, and the rest of his beloved flock, beside those whom he spoke of as resting in their graves, shall one by one go up to God, he will there meet them at the gate of heaven, and lead them to the Lamb, saying, "Here, Lord, am I, and the children thou hast given me."

Oh, may *we—all*—be there.

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